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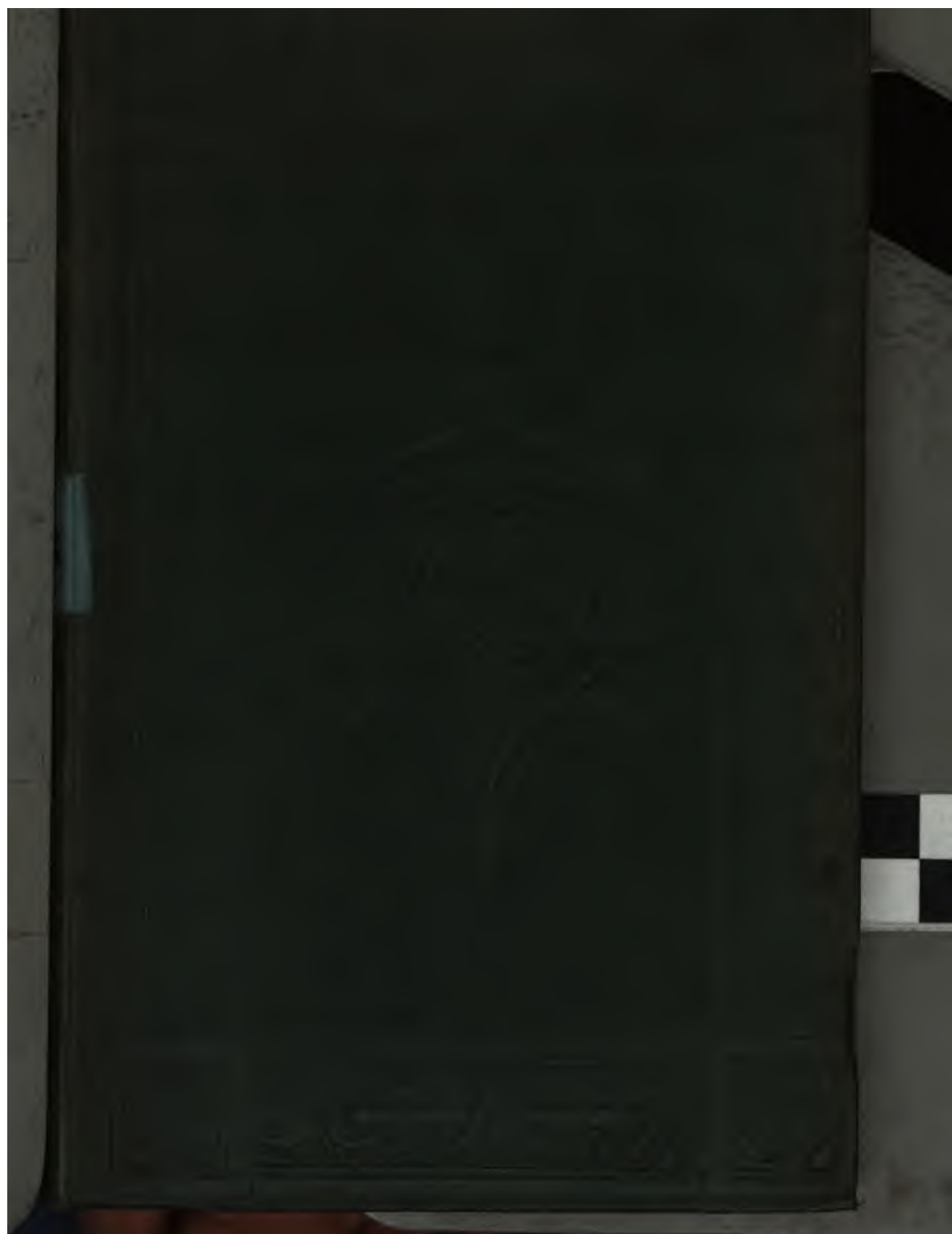
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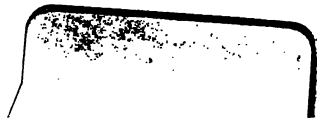
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CHARLOTTE CORDAY;

AN HISTORICAL TALE,

BY

ROSE ELLEN HENDRIKS,

AUTHOR OF "JOAN OF ARC," "THE ASTROLOGER'S DAUGHTER,"
ETC., ETC.

" C'est le crime qui fait la honte et non pas l'échafaud."
CORNEILLE.

LONDON:

R. GROOMBRIDGE & SONS,

PATERNOSTER ROW.

1846.

989.



TO

THE MOST NOBLE,

THE MARQUESS OF NORTHAMPTON,

THIS LITTLE WORK,

IS DEDICATED;

AS A SLIGHT TOKEN OF RESPECT.

BY

THE AUTHOR.

INTRODUCTION.

IN submitting the following Historical Tale to the kind and liberal criticism of the literary world; I feel that however unworthy I may be to take my place amidst the gifted, still, I may claim the privilege of young authorship, and sue for indulgence. The flattering terms in which several leading journals reviewed my first novel, "The Astrologer's Daughter," would be in itself a rational reason for proceeding in my literary career, and if ambition be ever pardonable, that ambition which seeks for fame, may surely be tolerated if not approved of.

It is not my intention here, to write a biographical sketch,—multum in parvo. Kind readers, much of the happiness, more still of the hopes of my life depend upon the success of my literary labours.

I have always considered there is cowardice and meanness in using our pens as weapons of defence, alias, weapons of offence. My page shall neither be sullied with complaints against others, nor entreaties for myself.

Suffice it, that in the year which has elapsed since "The Astrologer's Daughter" appeared before the public, I have been collecting MS., which will appear in succession. May I humbly hope, that kind and intellectual judges will watch with pleasure the gradual improvement of a young candidate for fame, and that time will award me that place which my anxious heart so dearly covets.

My intention in the present volume has been to render a popular subject still more amusing, by supplying the lovers of romance with an interesting tale. The subject is sufficiently engrossing, and it remains only to be proved whether I have succeeded in the various additions which fiction requires. Need young authors fear to take such a course when "The Great Unknown" could bend his lofty genius to embody truth with fiction. In conclusion let me hope that I am too unpretending, too young, and too unobtrusive to have any literary foes; therefore in looking upon the Press as a friend, not a harsh judge, I shall boldly send my little tale to press. Kind public, aid me also, and be lenient towards a young author.

CHARLOTTE CORDAY.

CHAPTER I.

Brightly shone the sun upon the face of the earth, fragrantly sweet was the perfume the flowers exhaled in the early morning's gale, the gay lark was soaring aloft, and the denizens of the grove tuned their lays, whilst the sheep bells in the distance sounded harmoniously upon the ears. Not a glade but disclosed a flowered freight; in mead and valley the grass was spangled. Flora had given forth her bountiful behest, her hand was stretched forth, her radiant smiles gladdened the earth, and her cornucopia was opened to replace the snowy rigor of winter.

Is there not sometimes a spell in the early breeze ? Does the influence of nature ever whisper soft tidings to the heart? Does not the summer hold, as poets tell us "A mansion of smiles?" but, does it not also require a thoughtful heart to enjoy those innumerable beautiful ideas which cause those smiles to spring?

Alas! for France—alas for the land of mirth, for the land of the vineyard—for the region of light hearts!

The sun shone brightly and it was summer; but bloodshed and oppression were in the land; it was ruled by an iron hand—the guillotine reeked with victims, the populace beheaded a King; and conscience stricken they dare not cry for vengeance: alas, for those sad times!

Vice in every shape was walking abroad, domestic dwellings were broken open, the father could hardly trust his son, and the wife clinging to her husband, vainly asked for protection; the guillotine cared for no one, the beloved of her heart was preparing for his farewell to earth.

It is with reluctance we bid farewell to earth, we cling to life, even where sorrow or pain has dimmed the lustre of our days, yet the prospect of a heavenly home, is the bright gaol we have in view. The king in his regal palace, heaves many a sigh of regret, ere the last one is breathed which rends life in twain.

The peasant in his lowly cot, would fain wander once more in the gay green fields, regrets commingle with hope, and lovely as domes of surpassing grandeur seems the lowly domain the man of toil is leaving. But, oh, the deep agony of life being sacrificed to the tyranny of our fellow men; oh, the horror of the moment when the

gaze of thousands rests upon one devoted head—when the murmur of many tongues seem too boisterous for endurance, when the last drops of agony are standing upon the doomed man's brow.

Dark, darker than blackest night must be the dreams of those, who send their fellow creatures to meet the dread tribunal seat on high. God has not willed it yet, he has not recalled the soul from its tenement of clay : presumptuous mortals, daring to take from the Almighty's hands the life man can only take away, but God can *give*. My story commences in the summer of 1793, no wonder then, that the fragrant flowers were disregarded, no wonder that the summer's dower was, if not thanklessly, at least listlessly received.

Many beautiful provinces were revolting, the vineyards were neglected, the implements of agriculture were superseded by the weapons of war; where the peasant woman had been wont to sing a merry lay, she now sung a dirge over the memory of her husband's loss. The unhappy Louis the sixteenth was cold in the grave, the appalling crime of regicide palsied the faculties of some, and filled others with superstitious fear. One party fancied France was doomed, another that the demon of sin was let loose amongst them. Sinners confessed, but

their confessors had deeper dyed crimes on their own conscience.

Then it was that the Girondins endeavoured to be heard; fearful of being again led by monarchy. this party was more moderate than the bold, fearless, and cruel, who enlisted under Marat and Robespierre. But these two fearful men, were determined to be rulers; all powerful, all cruel, all despotic, they banished the Girondins; the guillotine reeked with their blood, and those who escaped in the provinces, led a miserable life, fearful of the next hour, without home, without power, looking at the world as a vast blank: for alas, the scaffold had made terrible havoc with those dear and near to them. Was it to be ruled by Marat and Robespierre that the French had sacrificed Louis? Alas, they felt they deserved their punishment, they knew that blood calls for blood, and fearfully was the hideous call answered; Paris, the light city of amusements; Paris, was like the spectre of the once cheerful city of polite pursuits and refined arts. No more was breathed the air of a courtly hemisphere, the voice of music was silent and dead, the light dance was no more trod. Paris was the saddest capital of the most disturbed country of Europe. Other nations were looking on. Italy hailed disturbances which had so often

rent its own bosom in twain; Russia's calm, calculating eye was upon the city; Spain was plotting; Portugal abetting, and England was receiving the wretched fugitives from the republican seat of discord, whilst heroes of future glory were studying war and politics, and waiting for the proper moment for earning fame.

More degrading still, the heads of the republican of France were mean men, descended from the lowest grades of society. Circumstances had placed unexpected power in their hands, and high bred politicians felt a cankered germ of bitterness; it would have been more pleasant to bow submission to more elevated minds. Noblemen of the ancien régime, of unspotted character, walked to the scaffold, wearing a disdainful curl of scorn upon their lips: it was bitter to be condemned by men who once would not have deemed themselves worthy of standing in the waiting halls of their chateaux, for pride follows men, even to the guillotine.

Who was Marat ?

One who had conducted for some time a low paper, calculated to inflame the minds of his vacillating countrymen, in which recommending a republic, he was thinking of *himself*, and too truly were his wishes realized. Why will not men pause when they talk of a republican

government, let them mention one single instance, in which an individual has not succeeded in becoming far more despotic than a crowned king; let them remember that monarchy is subservient to well timed regulations, that order reigns, and that order is the universal rule of *national happiness*—then votaries of a republic, turn your eyes to its disorder, its consequent revolts, its bloodshed, its notorious ignorance. The hero of a republic need ever have exile, or the scaffold in view; instead of a jewelled crown, he wears one of deep piercing thorns.

Yet Marat deemed himself secure, he fancied he was every day mounting nearer and nearer the pinnacle of his ambition, and from the summit of his power, he beheld in fancy all France bowing submission to him. The republican now wrote his journal in order to convey his thoughts to the people, he no longer sat at his desk and heard the midnight hour strike, wondering as a poor man will wonder, whether the sale of his work would give him the necessaries of life. Ah, many a French nobleman had served to enrich this demagogue of revolts; his coffers groaned under their ill gotten treasures, and his rich hotel was sumptuously furnished. And this miserable man thought he was happy! When for a time his fevered brain was at rest he dared to in-

dulge in the softness of love—he dared encircle with his blood-stained hands, the form of a woman; his polluted tongue could utter words of softness, his maniacal face was lighted up with a leer; he *dared* to fancy he loved, and strange to say woman could return that love.

Marat's housekeeper was the object of this attachment, for, intolerant of all laws, the marriage rite was scoffed at, and never heeded; whilst Marie was sacrificed in her youth and her beauty, until crime became familiar to her. What a strange contrast to Marat's ungainly, thin, diminutive dwarfish figure, was the beautiful being who had degraded herself by loving such a man. Yes, this being now universally execrated, loathed, abhorred; could inspire love, and love to a beautiful woman. But Marie once gentle and good, gradually became cold-hearted to all the world save Marat; she could repulse beggars, she could shake off the unhappy creatures who knowing her to be all powerful with Marat, would oftentimes kneel at her feet: she could hear the most dreadful recitals without shedding a tear, she could love the wretch—the assassin—the brutal leveller of all human happiness. What more could be said of Marie, than the fact of her loving Marat implies?

CHAPTER II.

One evening a party were assembled at Caen, in Normandy, at the house of a gentleman of the Girondin politics,--Barbaroux, Petiou, Roland, Servan, Dumourier, and other well known characters were there; but, none shone more brightly for his sparkling eloquence, than a young officer of the name of Belzunce, who together with many others, was included in the banished list from the capital. Although intimate with the Girondin party, and actually banished for being one of their sect, Belzunce was in fact nearly a royalist; or, if in the commencement of the opposition to the "constituante" of 1791 he had sided with the Girondins, he repented that his vote had ever been given to so nefarious a transaction as beheading a king. Now, that 1792 had passed in strife and disunion; now that 1793 had been ushered in with murder and revolt, Belzunce thought sadly of the times present, and recalled those early days, when he sat at the festive board at his father's chateau; and now, alas, all was changed. His home was no longer *his*, others had taken possession of it; his father had bowed his

venerable head to the stroke of the fatal guillotine; and his mother, his gentle mother had died of a broken heart. He had a sister, she was a sweet young girl in her nineteenth year, beautiful and accomplished; instead of gracing festive halls with her presence, instead of presiding over her ancestral home, Adèle Belzunce was residing at a secluded convent at Armans, and all her brother's care was to shield her from the remorseless men who derided virtue and laughed at their victims.

Belzunce was extremely handsome, indeed, nature seemed to have been lavish of her gifts; his complexion unlike most of his countrymen, was beautifully red and white, he had clear dark grey eyes shaded with deep black lashes, his features were nobly formed, his nose aquiline, and his upper lip classically shaped, his brow was very lofty, and his head most gracefully placed on his shoulders, his form easy and pliant, seemed hardly fit to bear the martial uniform, for Belzunce was the beau ideal of one of those elegant beings a woman spontaneously admires when she sees him at her side in the ball or drawing room ; but Belzunce, though he was only four-and-twenty, had lived in troublesome days, and upon his fine brow another tale than that of pleasure had stamped its mark. It was the tale of blood ! never could

the son forget that he had a father's death to avenge; never could he forget that though the Girondins were actually republicans as well as the "constituantes," Marat and Robespierre, by the power of their word, had sentenced the author of his being to an ignominious death, had banished his party, and confiscated his estates.

The château of the old Count de Belzunce, was on the frontiers of the Gironde, and Roland and old Belzunce being sworn friends, when the former was sacrificed to Marat's revenge, his friend was the next victim; and young Belzunce who had originally been in the royal army, but had voluntarily left it, when Louis the Sixteenth was in his opinion more a pretended saint than a fit head of an army; found himself banished as a Girondin, before he had scarcely sounded his own politics.

The Girondins as a party were little better than Marat's, they had ever proved their apathy to monarchy, and had early revolted against the unfortunate Louis.

The members of this party were termed Girondins because they were returned by the department of La Gironde (Bordeaux). They were republicans, but as they were for the greatest part gentlemen, it necessarily followed that they had more refined notions of republican

liberty than Marat and Robespierre ; but, notwithstanding the brilliancy of their speeches, the thorough bred fluency of their arguments, notwithstanding their elegance and refinement: had they been the "constituantes," or had they had Murat's success, the plausibility of their ree find elegance would have been more dangerous than the coarseness of Marat's principles, and the libertine sensuality of his conduct; for both Marat and Robespierre satiated the populace by the very coarseness of the bold vice they first admired.

Rolan, Servan, Claviere, and Dumourier, had once been in the royal ministry, and it was not so much apathy to Louis, as dissension amongst their own members which marked them out as a decided party. After resigning office, they indulged in dangerous schisms against monarchy, and when Louis met his sad end, the Girondins were considered as much republicans as the "constituantes." In the convention, most of the girondins had voted for the death of Louis; but when the sentence was finally passed, they repented. It was too late, the more zealous republicans had already registered their votes, and through posterity the blot must ever there remain.

When the monarch of France was indeed beheaded, the

horrible crime appeared before the repentant Girondins; they pitied the king, the father, the husband; they pitied the man of the world quitting it ere his pilgrimage was achieved, and they looked on horror-stricken at the bloody deeds which followed, in horrible, in quick succession. When females of royal descent, of stainless purity, of refined and elegant manners, were led to the scaffold, were exposed to the coarse rudeness of the mob; oh, then the girondins felt the true horror of a republican government in France, with ignorant and remorseless men as its leaders; but they were soon overpowered, for a Girondin became at length the hidden name of a royalist, and a royalist was synonymous to vengeance and the scaffold.

But at length the position of the Girondins became very critical, those (and there were many), who were still averse to monarchy, were equally opposed to France being governed by the ignorant men, who styled themselves "friends of the people," and between Marat's party and the Girondins, there existed a deep jealousy. Marat, conscious of his coarse habits, envied the elegance of his opponents, and as he was the demagogue of the revolutionists, he soon succeeded in triumphing over them.

I have before said that my tale commences in 1793: I should have said it was in the month of June of that year, for the previous month had been marked by steps which will not be placed at full length before the reader, suffice it that the Girondins were opposed by armed multitudes, their leaders were some imprisoned, others banished, and on the 31st of that month, twenty-nine deputies of that party were imprisoned. Thus stood matters when a party of those banished from the capital assembled at Caen, and amongst them the handsome Belzunce has been introduced.

The individuals had not met from any particular motives referring to politics. If to listen to light conversation, and talk to women, when the heart is sad and the spirits failing, can be called a pleasurable re-union, this was the ostensible purpose which brought the banished Girondins to meet at the cheâteau of the Count ———

The chateau was well lighted up, and the garden was illuminated with variegated lamps, suspended from tree to tree. Female beauty wandered from grove to grove, now pausing to see the pale moon reflected on the surface of a limpid lake, now looking at a bank of flowered beauty, now gazing aloof in admiration of the lambent stars; but oftener still listening with palpitating hearts,

to those soft whisperings from manly tongues, which in the twilight hour, seem doubly sacred to the ears of those who listen entranced to the words, which perhaps they have never heard before with the same pleasure.

CHAPTER III.

Banished, disinherited, crest-fallen, wandering from province to province, still Belzunce forgot his own feelings when he found himself by the side of woman.

On the night in question he wandered from grove to grove, listening in enchanted pleasure to the tones of a most musical voice. A sweet voice is a lovely gift, it seems to draw us insensibly towards the speaker; if words are uttered in plaintive sorrow, we seem to share in the heart's grief, for a soft voice is a captivating instrument, conveying a kindred sensation to the soul, which is beyond any power of the pen to describe.

Belzunce was listening to the beautiful descendant of Corneille, he was walking by the side of the belle of the neighbourhood—he was talking to the gifted Charlotte Corday. Young as she was, the fire of genius had already stamped an indescribable loftiness on her beaming face, her mellow dark eyes were at one moment suffused with that soft moisture which poetical thoughts engender, the next they were flashing in a halo of brightness, and the rounded dimples added something piquante to the

whole expression of a face upon which every motion of the mind was traced. The mouth rather small, displayed when parted, a charming set of teeth, but Charlotte's greatest attraction was the variety of her rich complexion, at one moment pallid with emotion, the next lighted with the most brilliant glow, whilst her glossy hair fell in long, natural ringlets, black and spiral, and shaded her beautifully formed throat.

Charlotte Corday was a beauty, yet she never excited the envy of her own sex, she knew she was beautiful, but it never gave her a moment's thought; energetic, poetical, a rapturous admirer of all that is beautiful in nature and men; such was the beauty herself, and her lofty soul recoiled then, at the bare idea of vice—alas, alas, to what did it afterwards stoop?

Let us not anticipate, let us not call the voice of the tempest, whilst the bright sun of June is shining, let us talk of Charlotte Corday, the bright, the trusting, the beautiful. What a charming pair, conversing in the deep pathos of love, the tall and full figure of the lovely girl, by the side of the graceful officer.

And he was pouring into her ears that tale the beauty had long anticipated, she had seen it trembling in the eyes, ready to burst the confines of the lips, and now it

was told—that tale of a future life of bliss, that first whisper of love.

It is sweet to hear it trembling for the first time near the ears, to know that through the wide world, there is another heart, indifferent to all others, beating in unison with our own; it is sweet to behold the eye of love fixed upon the face which burns under its own blushes of timid pleasure; it is sweet to place the hand in that of the being to whom the ear is listening; it is sweet to love.

So thought Charlotte Corday as Frederick Belzunce poured forth his vehement protestations; he loved her, but he had nothing to offer save that love; he adored her, poverty would be rich if shared with her, and the descendant of Corneille was romantic enough to listen to her lover, and poetical enough to remember only that she was loved. Sweet and mellow, like the tuneful notes of the lark was that sweet voice, as it replied in a lower whisper still.

Frederic I have long loved you, but now I know not why, I tremble as I hear you pronounce your words—make no vows my beloved, make no promises, let us trust to the future, for the present is dark enough.

“Ah, so it is,” sighed Frederic, “clouds dark and tempestuous are around me, murder is on all sides, my

fortune could be told without pausing to take breath, my position in life is not worth a thought, my home is no longer mine, other feet tread the familiar park where in years gone by I roamed free hearted: you are right Charlotte, the present is dreary enough."

"Frederic, Frederic, you are above the belief of the less exalted part of mankind. Think you then Charlotte Corday could love man for his gold or possessions? No! no! no!" continued the energetic girl passionately, "I love thee for the qualities of thy mind, I love thee for all that is bright and beautiful, I love thee for thyself!"

"Oh, then, surely," exclaimed the delighted Frederic, "the present is beautiful."

"Nay, nay, wait my own; wait until this heart pulsates all for thee, now it is divided; it is full of grief, and care, and shame."

"Shame, Charlotte!"

"Yes, shame, Frederic: shame for my own countrymen; shame that I am a Frenchwoman; shame, that my sovereign's blood dyes even now the earth; sorrow that his murderers, the blackhearted, the licentious, the cruel, should triumph and rule: and this they call a free republic."

Frederic Belzume coloured; he remembered that he had been against his sovereign, he had seen Louis the sixteenth abandoned and had not flown to his rescue; but Charlotte did not notice the pain she had given, or she would not have continued,—“It is fit methinks,” she said, “that we should suffer penance for a nation’s sins. Frederic, I love thee, I cling to the hope of the future with thee; but not yet, not yet.—Wait until all this bloodshed is over, wait until the morrow lights not upon a desolate home; now the sun which one day shines on a man’s hearth, the next lights him to the scaffold. And, oh Frederic, wait until you have tried to recover, not your fortune, but your position in life. Must you hide yourself like a stag at bay?—must you fear Marat?—must he use that influence over you, which his demoniac writings have influenced over France?”

“Charlotte, I fear you are an enthusiast.”

“I am, and accuse, the horrible times in which I live; rather *accuse* me *not*, but pity me; that the softness of woman gives place to the wild fire of indignation. If you would see me soft and gentle as your sister Adèle, I beseech you then teach me how to change my heart, teach me to forget that within my veins the blood of

poets is flowing ; oh, would that I were a warrior instead of a weak girl, how surely my hand would know where to plant the dagger, it should go straight to the vital part of Marat's heart."

"Oh Charlotte, be calm, I beseech you; these are not the imaginings which should pour forth from a maiden's heart."

"I know it, I know it; and yet Frederic, I will not disguise it from thee, such are my thoughts by day, such are my visions by night; they are stronger than love, they are stronger than my physical strength; these thoughts were born in me, and with my death will they be buried."

"Nay, sweet girl, love will banish such thoughts away, it is a feverish dream which your poetical nature has nurtured; to man belong the many thoughts of ambition and strife; to woman, the brighter visions of life."

"Then I am a woman, but I have a man's mind," said Charlotte, "and do not thou Frederic, place thy affections upon me; I have strange fancies, I am moody and changeable; go forget me, go buckle on your sword and linger no more in ladies' presence, go assert your name, go revenge your father. I should not die of grief

to see you fall amidst the brave, but I should die grief-stricken to wed the man who crouched to Marat."

What thoughts filled the soldier's heart as he gazed upon the beautiful creature by his side. The Arab loves his steed the more because it is fiery and wild, the lover adored his mistress when he saw her whole frame trembling with extraordinary emotion. Passionately, and yet tenderly he raised her hand to his lips, and then at that soft pressure Charlotte Corday was no longer the enthusiast, she was the timid woman.

Belzunce could have thrown himself at her feet, as all of a sudden, lofty but sad ideas, morbid feelings were changed; when the fiery dark eye looked softly tender; when within his own he felt the small hand quivering—thus was it that Belzunce loved woman.

But Charlotte was like a rainbow, if you admired one ray, you had not time to express your wonder, when lo, another hue appeared; the warlike woman was now the poetical being of imagination, and such, in other less sad times, Charlotte Corday would naturally have been.

"It is growing chilly," she said, "let us return—but, no, no, not yet, only linger for a moment Frederic. Look at the myriad of stars, how mystically beautiful are the heavens! how the seraphs above must gaze

loathingly upon this our world of strife; the clouds seem to melt in tenderness, but we are rolling in the gore of war. Oh, France, France, a storm is in thy bosom, some invidious demon of wickedness is fanning thee with its pestilential breath. Where now is the melody of national happiness? Where the light song of the heart?—Arise some bright, some brave spirit; shed thou thy influence o'er this unhappy land. Buckle on thy sword, girt on thy buckler; brave, but ideal spirit of man, save thou my country."

It mattered not that Charlotte Corday was invoking a spirit she had not associated with any particular features or form, she spoke rapturously, and her clear melodious voice rose and fell like the murmur of water falling in a gentle cascade.

And her eye—oh, how it kindled and sparkled, how her graceful form seemed to grow taller, how those upturned eyes seemed literally piercing the ethereal hemisphere on high.

"Beautiful Charlotte," cried the fascinated Belzume, "I could linger for ever by thy side, almost forgetting thou wert a woman; I could pay my homage to thy soul of fire."

"Say you so Frederic," replied the young enthusiast,

with a peculiarly melancholy smile; "oh say not those words again; know you that the soul you admire, is literally as you say, a soul of fire, burning and preying on every fibre of the body; know you that my days are feverish and my nights are sleepless; know you that my father and mother look upon me as a wild, almost a mad enthusiast; that I *hate* home—it is a bitter thing to hate ones' home, to turn in vain for a kindred spirit, to vainly endeavour to light up other minds with the fervid fire to be felt alone; all this is bitter to bear, and yet Frederic, I bear more than all this, and this is the first time I have ever opened my heart to mortal man—read it Frederic, open every page of a book hitherto sealed; read every strange incomprehensible passage; *try* to read, and if you cannot, pity me, but do not blame."

"Blame thee!" cried Belzume, "Oh no, what man listening to thee could blame? I admire thee, I adore thee, I never loved thus before. Oh, beloved, cast afar thy burning thoughts, reward my long constancy, be thou my bride."

"Not yet, not yet," still persisted the enthusiast, "no, my own Frederic, I will not fetter thee with my presence; free shalt thou be, free to fight, free to *slay*

the tyrant; there, thou hast heard my wish."

"Alas, alas! Charlotte, tell me who is *the tyrant*; are not we oppressed by many; who is *the tyrant*?"

"Who; do you ask? Who? The man whose pen, dipped in red, red gore, has traced its venomous words, and inflamed the brain of the populace; the man, who pretending to wish for a republican government, in fact, usurps a kingly power; a man, whose ignorance and impiety are alike, one who stops never at vice, who mocks and scoffs at virtue, one whom history will brand with the mark of shame. Frederic, as God is my witness, I here vow I will not marry thee until *Marat exists no more*."

"Charlotte, beloved, I pray thee recal thy words; I pray thee doom me not to misery."

"I have said it, I have uttered my vow, and I will keep it too; if you wish to be quite free, take back your words."

"Cruel, cold-hearted girl, is it thus you value love?"

"Cold-hearted," cried Charlotte, whilst another of those strange smiles, full of meaning, passed over her countenance. "Know you all the sacrifice I make? but no, no, you cannot, it is one of the mysteries of my strange mind, that it can only contain one deep topic

at once, it would reel and turn were it more full. Once I were thine Frederic, that thought of love alone would reign in my breast; it were easy to fly to other countries to forget our own—it seems easy, but oh, it would break my heart. A cold corpse would soon repose on the earth, instead of a warm throbbing form upon *thy* bosom, Frederic, again I say wilt thou be free?"

"No, no, I will wait thy pleasure, all these sad scenes can no more last, than can thy fiery thoughts."

No more, no more, forget my words, remember only thou art, and ever will be beloved—hark! Some one is singing, let us go in doors."

And truly whilst Hesper was shining in the heavens, whilst Phoebe was holding her fairy clan, music was swelling its tuneful notes; hearts were melting under its genial influence; sighs, at soft recollections of the past, seemed to keep time with the notes. Some dream of overwhelming weal was floating across Belzunce's mind, for he leaned against a pillar which supported part of a lofty room; and a tear trembled in those eyes of animation.

Charlotte's frame quivered, for the child of enthusiastic poetry loved music well; and now a renowned singer was at the instrument. Hark! He is singing.

CHARLOTTE CORDAY.

MUSIC'S TRIUMPH.

Tho' sorrow dim our path on earth,
 Tho' grief should weave its spell ;
 Oh never, canker'd is our mirth,
 For we love Music well.
 Tho' storms should rise, and hearts in pain,
 Should quiver 'neath the dart,
 Oh Music, wake thou once again,
 And play thy charmed part.

Like surges ploughing wild the deep,
 Like ocean's waves when high,
 Like thunder when it wakes earth's sleep,
 Like light'ning in the sky.
 Thus sorrow, foaming o'er our path,
 By Music chased away ;
 Like rainbows hailing nature's laugh,
 Shall make all earth be gay.

When wild and dark, when war doth rage,
 When lower'd is the brow ;
 E'en then soft Music doth assuage,
 Amidst the martial glow ;
 Whilst horses tramp to trumpet's cry,
 The Music doth inspire ;
 It drives away the warrior's sigh,
 And lights his soul with fire.

Charlotte Corday scarcely breathed until the song was finished, then rising suddenly, whilst a shower of dark curls receded from the brow on which they had rested, she arose and took up a guitar. All eyes were turned towards her ; and if some persons ever accused

her of one fault, too much embonpoint ; her fine bust swelling with poetical emotion was then beautiful, though the one fault which women especially observed, was not forgotten when they cast a criticising glance at the young musician. Every feeling, however, gave place to admiration, when after pensively running over the strings of the instrument, Charlotte Corday began to sing, the music and words of her own fervid conception—

TO NORMANDY.

Sweet sunlit skies, my native home ;
 Normandy, of landscapes rare ;
 Such pensive thoughts to thee doth roam,
 Land of my anxious care.
 No glaciers here, no Vulcan's roar,
 No snowy falls, no gloom :
 Yet Normandy, tho' we adore,
 Oh, hail we still thy tomb.

For free thou art, but oh, the storm,
 Thy own vales may embrace ;
 And all thy meadows rich and warm
 Of beauty may efface !
 Bow not thou to the treacherous stroke,
 Be thou as firm as free,
 Bear thee on, as the sturdy oak
 Braves all inclemency !

CHARLOTTE CORDAY.

Thy olive groves and vineyards bright.
Thy flow' red meads I love !
For tyrants shall not spoil the sight
Of Normandy's sweet grove.
The grove of love, the spangled mead,
The garden's Flora's taste ;
Oh warlike tread ; away—recede,
Leave Normandy in haste.

Tyrants leave the merry meadows,
As pure as cloudless sky,
Blue and bright, its only shadows,
Fall from the realms on high !
Let rank, and pomp, and haughty sway
Dare not to breathe a sigh,
Ye warlike feet away—away—
Oh leave our Normandy.

Oh heed not thou each mighty foe,
Should war upon thee turn,
Dear Normandy ! at thy o'erthrow,
The bravest souls would burn ;
Thy tomb then hail, shed not a tear,
Recall not summer back,
My Normandy, my Province dear,
Abjure the tyrant's track.

Thus sung Charlotte Corday ; and oh, she felt the words she uttered ; they were indeed impromptu, and all felt that their simplicity was doubly graceful from that circumstance. The air, full of melody, full of music's poetical fervour ; none, save a heart full of

painful genius could have composed it. All flocked around the beautiful Improvisatrice, but Charlotte Corday never heeded the voice of adulation, her pride could not stoop to the littleness of being flattered. It is, wherefore, true genius is often called *bold* by little minds ; but whilst it is too unselfish to keep all its rich stores hidden, whilst genius lavishes its gifts for others to admire, it is wrapped in a pure halo of its own conception ; and knowing it is able to carry through the design upon which it is intent, genius listens in pity to the admiration, which fain would intoxicate the senses.

But Charlotte Corday's independant soul, carried the hate of flattery to an extraordinary degree ; her rounded lips curled in scorn ; and placing her hand in that of Belzunce, she remarked that the hour was late, and she was weary of the noise around her.

Belzunce led her to a quiet, demure, little old lady, with whom Charlotte was staying, and who was in fact her guardian on the present occasion ; a few moments more, and she was away from the lighted saloon ; and in a short time her thorough bred head, too full of poetry, too full of fire, was resting on a sleepless couch.

CHAPTER IV.

Charlotte Corday ! beautiful enthusiast, object of regret and pity,—keenest pity, but never of scorn ; how mysteriously deep, how passing strange, how sadly rife with morbid imaginings is the trembling heart, palpitating within that lovely form.

Yes, bold it is, and yet trembling—trembling at the intenseness with which it is throbbing ; poor enthusiast.

Oh ! imagination kindles up so many thoughts, rife with coming misery, at the word enthusiasm ; and genius is a dangerous, a fatal gift, especially to a female.

Happy those, who, possessing genius, allow not its fire to rage ; happy those who wake from the dreams of enthusiasm to the *reality* of life.

Charlotte Corday gave herself up to thoughts of love as she lay sleepless on her couch, but even in this softer mood, the same morbid feelings embodied her thoughts ; the moral beauty of that high mind, afterwards too deeply stained, mixed itself then in

every pleasing sensation, in the gush of delight with which the love of Belzunce was remembered.

No, no, as she had said to her lover, she would not burden him with her love, she would leave him free to regain the sword of renown, which was now hanging listlessly by his side ; he should not have a woman near him to make him forget in her softer moods of love, that there was another love—that of glory. In Freedom and love ; in those days, thought Charlotte, how I could have loved Belzunce. Loved him ! And is not my heart his ? Does it not seem as if, even now, his pensive grey eyes were piercing the darkness of night ? Does not his tuneful voice ring in my ears ? Do I not feel his warm embrace ? Poor Frederic !—Who art thou ? An exile ! And exiled by whom ? By the revolutionist tyrant, who stained his hands in the King's blood, and washed them afterwards in the waters of triumph. No, no, no ; away the dream of love, away the dream of happiness, Marat cannot breathe the same air as Charlotte Corday—not at least, can she be happy in the same hemisphere. Why does that tyrannical demagogue of revolts continually haunt me ? Why does his execrable voice jar in my hearing ? Why does the leer of his face

taunt me, and dare me—dare me to what?

Oh! God forgive the heinous thought; he is the creature of thy moulding, he must live, even though the prince of darkness should be with him—he must live. Then will I do penance for my sins; for the sins of the revolutionist, the tyrant, the oppressor. His image must still wither my imaginings, his name must still canker my heart. Oh! that I could quench this burning fire. Oh! that I could sleep. Oh! that I dreamed once again of the tranquil convent, in which my young and innocent days were spent.

Was it indeed in convent walls that this too ardent heart had budded and blown? Had Charlotte's companions indeed been simple nuns? Had the convent bells some mystic sound, incomprehensible to others, clear and defined to her?

Charlotte's education had been simple, but endowed with the most acute observation; she had been her own instructress, until every passage of the heart had been tutored to palpitate with some noble feeling, but the vivid force of a too imaginative mind, had lighted up quickly, a heart requiring much and very careful training. Its growth was now too luxuriant; many a sweet germ of modest virtue was crushed by the

one dominant root genius. Genius gave Charlotte Corday a fervid heart; and that heart was sacrificed to genius.

The young enthusiast was not calculated to be happy; there were no poets around her to catch the fire of her enthusiasm; there were no rapturous souls to feel as she did. Her father pitied her strange disposition, her mother gradually grew estranged from a being she could not understand—she was all *terrestrial*,—Charlotte, all poetically, morbidly sensitive; and although the child of poetry, had too much pride to allow any one to see how much this distaste in feelings pained her: her mother's words caused her many scalding tears, they fell upon the most tender soil—a poet's mind.

They scorched the soil, but they could not exterminate the root; there it remained, finding no kindred stems, yet budding and blooming amidst a garden of sterility.

Charlotte was unhappy—she had peopled the world with creatures of her imagination, and she found how ideal was the portrait; she had clothed the earth in the refined garb of poetry, and now she stood upon a blood stained land; the beautiful language which

her soul breathed, met no responsive voice; the music which, like aërial clouds, flitted tunefully on her hearing, found an echo only in a clash of steel. Dispirited, angry with the monotony of a world she had deemed so glorious; Charlotte first became peevishly disappointed, and then morbidly sad; and she ceased even to try to please her friends, from the moment she really believed their feelings were moulded in different clay to her own.

Her home at Armans became insupportable; she was free in the usual acceptation of the word, and yet she was trammelled with cords and fetters, which bind with iron clasps the minds of poets. Her mind was full, even to overflowing; and it became more densely crowded, without seeing the least channel, into which, to pour its overplus.

Poor Charlotte, she became wretched, and, like all the votaries of genius, she lacked one essential quality, which is, after all, very *much* more useful than *real* genius, especially in revolutionary days.

If Charlotte were the essence of the metal gold, her parents had moulded the glittering but useless ore into stamped coin; wherewith, to purchase a most useful ingredient—"common sense." They were neither mu-

sicians, poets, nor enthusiasts, but they preferred their current coin; it purchased experience, it taught them that the more domesticated they appeared, the more aloof they kept from scientific persons; the less talent they displayed, the more securely they would pass through life, and escape the notice of Marat and Robespierre, as well as the memorable proximity of the guillotine.

So Charlotte the enthusiast, wearied of her quiet home, and having a small but certain annuity left to her by a distant relation, quitted the paternal roof, and took up her abode at Caen, where she resided with a female friend; who, if not possessing Charlotte's lofty genius, had at least the patience to listen, with apparent pleasure, to the strange impulsive being whom she admired and pitied at the same time.

At Caen, it became Charlotte's misfortune to meet with several exiled Girondins; they were angry with Marat and his associates, and therefore the enthusiastic girl imagined they must be counter-revolutionists, she never reflected that the Girondins had, in fact, beheaded Louis as effectually as the "Constituantes," she enjoyed their society, she was proud of being admitted to those coteries, where under pretence of gay and light

assemblies, the exiles held their political meetings.

No vow bound her to secrecy, honour was written upon her brow, and men hung delighted gazing upon her, and catching enchanted, the rich tones of a voice which was musical in the highest degree. Yet, although Charlotte received the visits of all those who came to consult her, her vanity was never moved by any compliment save one: that was, that notwithstanding her youth and her excessive beauty, she was admired less than respected, and never had to reprove a man for a light compliment, or passionate look.

Ninon de l'Enclos, when she presided over the world of fashion, when fresh in her loveliness, she first held her court; she was never more in danger than the energetic Charlotte Corday. But the busy eyes of the world were elsewhere strained, and it is often the eye of the world which leads the heart astray, because it casts its blighting gaze upon youth, beauty, and talent; and there is an old traditional tale of the world which says that, these three beautiful qualities, joined together, are too dangerous for a female.

Charlotte Corday possessed them all, yet her heart never went astray; no document has ever recorded a censure against her morals, they were secured by genius,

and held in obeisance by the pride of a lofty mind. She who could not bear the world because it was too mean, could she bear herself if she were vicious? No, Charlotte Corday was surrounded by polished men, by exiled Girondins of refinement and honour, they guarded even their lips from expressing too much, they watched the enthusiast as we watch the growth of a plant, and they would have loathed themselves had they not revered every leaf of that very beautiful flower.

And Belzunce, how happy he felt when Charlotte became sensible to the charm of being loved; she had been his sister Adèle's companion, and that was, in itself, a claim upon his heart; but we have already seen that the strange mind, incapable, as the owner confessed, of obtaining more than one dominant passion at a time, chose to forego the bliss of love, and deemed it secondary to the feeling of patriotism, which now swelled majestically, sublimely grand over every other passion.

CHAPTER V.

Frederic Belzunce, young in years, was not the fresh, imaginative being, floating all hope and trust in the tranquil rivers of felicity. The knowledge he had acquired of the world was bitter enough, the scenes he had witnessed were terrible, the recollection of them too often harrowed his soul: revolution, the guillotine, murders, and death, these were the spectres which often, very often haunted his nightly slumbers. There *had* been a time when parental caresses were his share, when all these sorrows had never been dreamed of, when boundless glee seemed the young officer's portion, when a rich home sheltered him, and domestics obeyed his call: now, * * * * * Changed, all most dismally changed, the pang of being an orphan, stood foremost on the list; imagination strayed invidiously amidst scenes too poignant to be described, oblivion would not bind up the wound, for thought too freely asserted her independence.

Vainly summer spread her charms, vainly she spoke

in richest groves—in most lustrous skies; all was winter within, for the heart was desolate. The transcendent glow of the pure hemisphere, seemed only a mockery of the tempestuous clouds around the chagrined soul; and tears, votaries to a heart-broken mother, tarnished the glow of youths' beauteous eyes. The pageantry of life seemed over; Belzunce looked upon it as one vast world of corruption, he thought joy was meant to be turned to sorrow; the gayest laugh, only the echo of a tear.

But, as the tempestuous heavens are more serene after a storm, so, the pulse of man throbs more languidly after the fever of the soul is over. The sun, shining again in its wonted splendour, is hardly a type for the refreshed heart of Belzunce; if his troubled soul, grew at length less frenzied, a settled melancholy, a hardly gained resignation, chased away all the light-heartedness of youth.

It was this softened mood which had won the enthusiastic Charlotte Corday's heart; she, the untameable child of fiery emotions, loved the contrast of a more subdued soul; she loved man when bruised in spirit he desponded, she caught the lone sigh, and she responded to it with love.

At first she taught Belzunce to hate the world, but at length she taught him to pity it; and the musical, the persuasive eloquence of her voice, sometimes heard in silent groves, in the bewitching twilight hour, seemed inspired words. Whilst from listening, entranced to a creature, not to be judged by womankind in general, Belzunce turned admiring, and remembered the voice, speaking in the wise accents of years, was in fact belonging to a mere girl, a beauty too, and at length Belzunce dared to love. But it was some time ere he ventured to speak of his feelings; for he felt that, to be refused by Charlotte Corday, would add another sting to the many which barbed his soul, and living in the day dreams of hope, he thought he had acquired patience.

He thought so; but, when every pulse of his heart palpitated with throbs too keen to bear, when the genius of his beautiful companion had lighted up his own soul with fire, when the poetry of her language had nearly riven his senses, and the power of her beauty blinded all thought; when side by side they conversed, Belzunce thought love a hallowed sensation, and he imparted its tales to his lovely companion. Charlotte was not astonished, women of genius know when they are loved, they know it long before words

have given utterance to the language of the heart, they know by many a sympathetic feeling, and yet they feel strangely pensive when it really is heard for the first time.

Charlotte's hand quivered in that of her lover, yet, the gentle pressure once returned, Belzunce pleaded and talked in the mystic God's own language, until Charlotte's strange burst of passion broke upon him like a harsh dream; she loved him, could he doubt it? but her heart was filled with incomprehensible thoughts; and, sometimes recalling her conversation, Belzunce asked himself if Charlotte had ever met with personal insult from the licentious Marat.

He rejected the thought; who could dare to whisper a false tale in the energetic girl's ears? Who could do anything, save bow in homage, to her? The proudest rank was beneath the grandeur of her genius, the most refined feelings scarcely equal to the poetical fervour of her soul; who could offer Charlette Corday a heart if not subservient to her will, and what could her will be, save that of virtue. The Lesbian Isle of Sappho seemed the clime in which Charlotte should dwell, her eyes, dark as those of Castilian maids, beamed with purer rays; the only passionate glances they omitted

were, those springing from the lustre of her overflowing mind. Embodied in the subject she chose for her conversation, the speaker was lost in her own majestic halo; if men admired, they were too much dazzled to express it, they dare not offer the petty ore of flattery at the shrine of a temple, modelled in the very refinement of the richest metal. Belzunce, therefore, rejected his first thought, but he pondered not less on the subject, and he began to wonder, whether he should indeed try to regain his position and estate, as well as slay Marat.

But his soul sickened at the idea of blood—did not the blood of his murdered father continually haunt him? Did not the blood of Louis, the King, call for the deepest revenge? And, as his voice had been one of the many lifted up to sanction the deed, what penance could he endure deep enough to atone for the national offence committed?

By the misery of a whole nation, Belzunce thought Louis's death was being avenged, and if he must suffer for his deep dyed offence, how could he more deeply be pained, than by suffering the acute pang of protracted love—and the love of such a woman as Charlotte Corday? A love so refined, so poetically beautiful—

it was agony to look forward to the future and forego the bliss of the present, it was agony to remember Charlotte's vow: thus soliloquized Belzunce.

"I love Charlotte ardently, fervently—but, her mind is a mystery I cannot solve, the more I try to penetrate, the deeper I become entangled; I sometimes think I could quarrel with a woman having so much genius—but, instead of quarrelling, I can only admire. But women of genius are seldom very much in love, or rather their love is terribly divided, for they admire every heart gifted like their own; admiration in a single woman is cousin german to love. Perhaps Charlotte's heart may rove. Rove! Oh no, I think it cannot, I cannot doubt Charlotte Corday's constancy—has she not always remained true, even to her own strange feelings? Has she not braved domestic strife, and the opinions of the world? Has she not too much pride to bend to a falsehood? Am I not injuring her even in thinking she could be false?"

Thus reasoned Belzunce—and, at length he determined to try and learn patience, to wait until troubled factions were appeased, to wander houseless, portionless, and defy the hand of fate. Ah! He might defy it to daunt his manly spirit—but, he could not defy the

tempest when it fell upon his devoted head.

How he longed to raise his crest proudly amidst a more noble set of men than those who now ruled unhappy France. How he longed to see the day when fetters should be riven; those fetters, which chained public opinion in fear of the chief demagogues of the revolution. He felt now, like a bird in a larger cage than close imprisonment; yet, though allowed to range to a certain length, bars on all sides terminated the allowed space. The plumes of hope, sometimes, were too much damped even to soar amidst the allotted range; the mind, the precious mind felt crushed and altered. It seemed to Belzunce as if some sad destiny awaited him; he fancied he should never be happy, and never possess his beloved bride. All the elasticity of manhood failed to inspire him with confidence; he almost reproached himself for uttering words of love. He had thought to illumine the dark path of his destiny, to brighten the road of sorrow with a clear, beautiful light; he had thought of that solace to man's heart—the bright love of woman; that dear tie uniting heart to heart, and mind to mind—but, the vision was too bright to dawn in reality on the exiled one's path.

Oh, what power woman possesses over the nobler heart of man; if Charlotte Corday had but said the one word of consent, her lover would have taken her to another country; have borne her far from peril, murder, and wrong; have shielded her from every breeze of sorrow—and then, her own tragical end would have been averted. But this was not to be—and Belzunce, the exile, wandered about disheartened and unhappy.

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CHAPTER VI.

Nothing could exceed the beauty of the spot where the hapless Charlotte Corday dwelt with her friend. The habitation itself was a simple cottage—but, so surrounded with beautiful trees, plants, shrubs, and lawn, that it formed a clustering loveliness; the cottage, only a speck amidst a parterre of beauty; orchards and meadows, stretched around, and the cattle lounging gracefully, added to the picturesque appearance of the scene; rivulets and meandering streams, babbled so gently; the birds chirped their love call in the clustering branches; not a sound, save the hum of bees, pursuing their toils, and resting on flowers, of wild luxuriance; not a sound else was heard.

Often, very often, Charlotte Corday wandered for hours in meadows, orchards, and lanes; her thick tresses played wantonly round her brow, and the pure air of summer fanned her cheeks; yet, amidst the tranquility of nature, what ardent fever was preying on that wayward heart; how religion turned to gloomy fanaticism, and every thought centered only in one

No matter now what it was, it was poignant enough—for, as she pursued her walk, Charlotte would gaze up to the clear expanse above, with such a look of frenzied imploring, and then she would mutter “Oh, God will forgive me;” and then she would pray to the guardians of earth’s moulding. She fain would have thoughts pure enough for Angels to treasure—but alas, no spirit looked down from the spheres above, every holier idea turned again to earth’s cares; and, in the evening hour, in the soft endearing influence of twilight, again Charlotte wandered abroad, and her speaking eyes turned towards the lambent stars, as there they shone, lighting a world of sin. She would strive to forget that world—she would strive to commune with different things—but, again a demoniac face gleamed upon her, even amidst the lovely orbs on high, she buried her face in her hands, and she prayed.

Not for herself, this time, was the prayer—she prayed that the world might be rid of a tyrant—that France might be rid of its dreadful trials; she prayed, and she felt not refreshed.

Alas, alas! she asked not for a heart of resignation, she strove not to conquer thoughts unworthy a female’s

heart, the mind was still a quenchless fire, and then she wept.

Ah! in more unhappy days, what would she not have given for the solace of those tears, for now they fell like beneficent April showers, they tempered the aching load of pain at the poor fevered heart.

And sometimes Charlotte would feel literally too full of thought to endure the burthen, then her pen would relieve the oppressive load.

One evening she had taken her accustomed ramble, her friend had accompanied her, for she observed even a darker shade than usual gathering on poor Charlotte's brow.

Belzunce had that day determined to speak once more to Charlotte, to tell her that there were other countries save France in which to dwell; that to struggle now, was actually rushing into the lion's den; he came to bid her trust in heaven, and be comparatively happy.

Finding the cottage deserted, he lingered in the young enthusiast's sitting room, he almost feared the moment when she would return; he was now in a trance of hope.

As he looked around, he acknowledged the power

of genius, he owned that it could give elegance to this humble abode, there was an air of refinement, almost of luxury, in the little room. The beautiful needle-work she had wrought in the peaceful convent was tastefully dispersed, every chair was ornamented, and cushions, on which court bred ladies might have reposed, were there. The walls were adorned with simple, yet graceful drawings, they required no frame, they were finished with gold-edged paper, somewhat fantastically wrought. There were pet birds in their clean, well tended cages, there were flowers in abundance, arranged with rare taste; and on the table, the books which were all marked, and some thumb-worn, were such as a man's intellect might have grasped.

But Belzunce turned his eyes from all these, he opened a book in which he recognized Charlotte's writing—and, on the principle that a poet's thoughts are not all private, the lover scrupled not to read the tremulously traced words; he actually wept, when he remembered how Charlotte had told him. her days were sad and her nights sleepless, he quite believed it now—now, that the fevered thoughts were all before him. The pieces were never finished, and never had titles, for there was but one subject upon

which the pen wandered. Belzunce involuntarily read aloud the following snatches :—

Ambition's madness! slow first to unfold,
For young, or old, the moral is the same;
'Tis but the cowardice of seeming bold,
To speculate in fortune's changing game.

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There lurks such danger in soft sympathy;
Such looks are shed; such smiles are beaming then;
Such tender gaze which soothes our misery
To pain's excess—tho' meant to cure our pain.

* * * * *

Ambition! Yea! The tyrant king of kings!
Destroyer,—Fiend—by turns, friend or foe;
Ambition 'tis the demon madness brings,
And hurls the soul to realms of hell below.

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Dreadful, dreadful, dreadful, cried Belzunce, and is this the girl I love? Can I take her to my bosom? Can I recognize in her one spark of that softness which is entrancing in females? Can vengeance belong to womankind? Can such dark thoughts exist under the garb of beauty? And Charlotte looks soft and tender sometimes; even now I think I see her darkly fringed eyes. Oh, gentle Angels, take her in your care, shield her from such dangerous imaginations,

breathe into her ears the language of your own pure words, change Charlotte Corday's heart."

"And wherefore should my heart change? Is it not thine?" cried a sweet voice, and Charlotte threw her arms round Belzunce's neck; those sweet eyes were so full of love—for, who feels not the influence of the mystic God after a twilight ramble?

For a moment, Belzunce held the lovely girl to his heart—and, his own eyes glistened as they caught the reflection of hers; yet, the verses had nearly maddened him with regret and disappointment, and he cried out—

"Go, go, Charlotte; you are false."

"And dares any man call *me* false? Dare *you* call *me* false?" exclaimed Charlotte; stamping her foot and recoiling in horror? "Frederic Belzunce, are you mad that you call *me* false? Is there any one in the world I love, save you? Speak man, what mean you?"

"I mean, that your heart is terribly divided, why hate you Marat so fiercely?"

"Ha—you are jealous Frederic! Great God, he is jealous of my hate—know you what that hate is? Know you what it will lead me to?"

"Fall on your knees Charlotte Corday, fall low on

your knees; pray to the Almighty to forgive you, remember you are a woman. Go, confess to the Priest, and be absolved of your heinous offence."

"What have I done, I pray you?"

"You are encouraging thoughts which must nearly craze your brain ; you are very, very wicked."

Charlotte uttered a sharp painful laugh. "Wicked!" she cried; "And men dare call *me* wicked! And pray Sir Saint, where was your conscience when Louis was beheaded? But, go, go, never let me see you more, I will not play the coquette and have lover's quarrels, I hate such frivolity—away, away."

Belzunce reached the passage; Charlotte fancied she heard his retreating steps on the gravel walk — and, believing herself alone, she fell on her knees, and buried her face in the cushions of the sofa.

"Yes, yes," she cried passionately, "I shall pray now, for I have something to pray for; my poor heart was desolate enough, and now he is gone—gone without bidding me farewell; and he looked so sad, almost stern. Unhappy girl—what have I done? Does he think Charlotte Corday has not a heart, because it is a racked one? Alas, alas, all men think so!"

"Charlotte, pray forgive me!" cried Belzunce;



rushing forward, and coming in time to catch the young girl's fainting form ere she fell to the ground. "Dear, dear Charlotte!" cried the distracted lover, kissing her cold lips; "Do pray speak to me;" and at that moment, a heavy sigh proclaimed that consciousness was returning.

Charlotte blushed deeply, when she found herself supported by Belzunce, and all her native hauteur seemed to return.

"Press no more kisses upon my lips," she said; "did you not say I was false?"

"Forgive me, my adored bride," and saying these words, the young officer fell on his knees. "Charlotte, I am now full of the same fiery energy which fills your mind, command me no longer to do as you wish; I fly to Paris; I will retrieve my name; I will talk to the people; I will die in the attempt or Marat shall fall."

Oh, such a strange smile shone on Charlotte Corday's features, such a fervid glow lighted up her countenance; she fondly stroked back the rich curls which, short but thick, rested on her lover's brow; she looked at him as a modern belle would if her

lover had been making her a final offer, and she was now determining her admirer's fate.

But Charlotte thought not of the consequence, all she knew was, that Belzunce talked of Marat's death.

"Go, brave one, go, stay not to be weak again; go slay the tyrant; farewell, Belzunce, farewell."

"Farewell till we meet in happier hours; you shall hear from me Charlotte in a few days, let me look once more at your sweet face, let me hear again your melodious voice—ah! you are weeping."

"I am but a woman dear Frederic, albeit a strange one—but, the weakness is over; Charlotte Corday seldom weeps."

So the lover snatched himself away, and it was late ere Charlotte raised her head from her hands—for, notwithstanding all her assumed courage, she was sobbing bitterly.

Belzunce had talked of dying—the thought was full of anguish, tenderness recoiled at such a sacrifice—but, at length Charlotte the fond girl, became again, Charlotte the heroine, and the last words she uttered were "I will die with Frederic, if, so it needs be;" these were her last words—but, once more she drew

forth the book in which her thoughts were too painfully recorded, and there she traced lines, to Frederic Belzunce.

Oh ! Repine not, tho' we're parted,
Heart and soul must still be near
Live, but sigh not, broken hearted,
Thoughts of thee must still be dear.
Oh ! Repine not, cease thy weeping,
Time and change will heal thy grief,
And the *past* obliuions sleeping,
Will its love-toned vigils keep.

Oh ! Repine not, cease thy sorrow,
Better now to part in love,—
Better dream upon the morrow,—
Better look for hope above.
Thoughts of yore will steal around thee,
Thoughts of yore which *duy* reft ;
Oh ! Repine not, nor *forget me*,
Love hath changed, but thoughts are left.

CHAPTER VII.

What is that feeling which we denominate *présentiment*? How is it to be defined? Or, rather, can it ever be defined? Does it not mix itself with our being, until it is a very component part of being itself? We feel by *présentiment*, we fear by *présentiment*, we greet, and yet we know not why. If we are the creatures of impulse, it is often the *présentiment* of something we cannot define, which causes us to follow the impulse of the heart.

Ah, it was not a bright vision which now filled the heart of Belzuncc, as he sought his ancestral home.

Proudly he bore his manly steps, but his soul was sick and weary; he felt some warning voice bidding him take a last farewell of the sweet country of his earlier days; it was, wherefore, he had undertaken so long a journey, to Gironde—and at length, when the park gates of the *château Belzuncc* were before him, he cared not to control his weakness; he lent upon a stone and wept—wept bitter tears; he felt

as if his heart were breaking ; he longed to finish his life in that quiet spot—and, he turned heartsick from the pictures of the bloody capital of France.

Perchance Belzunce was not formed for war; perchance he was fitted to walk through the world, loving virtue, hating vice, wiping away the tears from the sorrowful, cheering the desolate hearts of the children of want?

Rebellion and discord had invidiously marred so sweet a character, and after the first bitterness of these tears was over, Belzunce brushed away the last one, deeming them weak and unmanly ; and with a heart though not more cheered, yet strenuously determined to brave all, even death, he slowly opened the Park gates and the fair estate was before him.

It could hardly be called a venerable pile, for it had frequently been modernized; fashion had disfigured that which antiquity had modelled ; but nevertheless, it was sumptuous looking with its pinnacles, projecting ornaments, and its various embellishments.

The venerable ivy crept not near the building ; but as if in contrast, a bridal group of the richest lilacs, fragrant roses, with honeysuckle and jessamine, formed a bower such as the fair Rosamond might have wander-

ed in, whilst poor Belzunce only sought the window—the sequestered window of the room in which he had first lisped “Mother.” Yes, there it was far apart from the state rooms, lest the sounds of noisy mirth should reach the spot. Aye!—Can it be possible? Tears once more are falling. Tears!—how seared are they when shed at the fount of early memory. How doubly seared when a mother’s recollection causes them to flow.

Many years had rolled on since those days; strange feet now trod the rooms, and all the sweet melancholy of the poet, Cowper, when he spoke in verse of the funeral morn, was filling the young officer’s heart, as with a fluttering fear, he placed his hand on the bell. In answer to his enquiries, he heard that the family in possession of the château was out, and that he might enter. *Might!* How the word jarred in his ears; how strongly inclined he felt to reply harshly to the harmless, grey-haired man before him. If he did not say in Gloucester’s peremptory words “*If*, how dare you answer me with *If*,” he repeated the obnoxious sounding *might* in so terrible a manner, that the superannuated lackey exclaimed “Dear me; the gentleman is mad.”

"What do you say?" said Belzunce.

"Nothing," was the answer, with a shrug of the shoulder, such as Frenchmen alone can give.

So Belzunce brushed past his conductor and rushed from room to room, passing his hands in agony to his brow, as he went on.

"Ah! Pray forgive me, simpleton that I was, not to recollect my young master."

Belzunce extended his hand—he now recognized old Pierre, and the old man's sobs sounded audibly with his own. Entreating to be left alone, he was obeyed; and the rightful heir wandered about the forsaken rooms: every object there reminding him of "days long syne."

Ah, the recollection of those "days long syne!" Perchance the prosperous man knows nought about them, but many a heart will echo in sadness "oh, the days long syne."

How often all is changed when we take this retrospective view, changed from "joy to sadness;" or else, wherefore echoes the lone sigh?

The pilgrim who has performed part of his journey through life, and has left the silvery stream of quietude for the eddies of the raging ocean, then looks back on

the days when he jested with perils; which he now alas, too keenly feels.

How the heart overflows with tenderness in viewing the home of our childhood ! To know that our gaze first lighted on the objects before us; every inanimate piece of furniture seems to breathe a tale, every room seems haunted with the shadows of those who tread those halls no more !

It was a moonlight evening, and Belzunce still lingered, longing, yet not daring to tear himself from the spot. The moon, so pale, lucid, yet so quiet, and so demurely lighting up the house in which that tortured heart lingered. How serene was the lovely luminary ; the shadow of the more mystic orb ! Casting celestial beams on earth, lighting with a faëry beauty the linden groves, and the forest trees playing in quivering streaks among the babbling falls. And then how sweetly came her starry clan of golden myriads; casting in mystic light, bright enough to be lustrous, but not too dazzling to be surveyed ! Mysterious !—Sublime !—How it speaks of God ! Do Atheists wander in the moon's hours of reflective thought ? Do they ever look at a June spangled earth ? Do they inhale the perfume of its flowery

freight? Do they strive to solve the mysteries of that all mystic hemisphere? Do they *never*, when thus contemplating his glories, tremblingly ask—is there not a God?

Ah, is there not? Is it not the hope beyond the grave; that promised dwelling with the Omnipotent Creator? That hope which binds up, and heals the wounds caused by the severing of earthly affections? Is not a communion with God, the hope of the good, the terror of the wicked?

Tremble often, if ye are sceptics, wander again and again; ask yourselves how the charming objects around you, formed from a shapeless chaos, assumed at length their graceful forms? Ask yourselves who breathed into your bodies the essence of life and the wonderful intellect of man? Reason not with the cold sophistry of the worldly; let nature speak in triumphant accents.

Belzunce was now in the chamber, which in boyish days he had been wont to call his own; he opened wide the casement, and gazing at the myriad of stars, his thoughts turned on Charlotte Corday, his first, his only love; he was indulging in a reverie, perhaps, never to be realized; he was imagining that she inhabited with him the home of his childhood, *her* children

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were standing on *his* nursery floor, her face wore the radiant beams of unclouded happiness, her step had the lightness of bounding spirits, he seemed to grasp the hand of his beloved bride, and then he felt it was but a château d'Espagne. How delusive are these castles so tangibly shaped! How they will play around the criminal's cell, mockingly portraying the semblance of freedom, when even the scaffold is preparing! How they make us imagine we are treading on Turkish carpets, when our feet are pressing the cold boards of poverty!

But we are all accustomed to build them in youth; and Belzunce destroyed one castle, only to build another. Ctesiphon built, and Erostratus burned the temple of Diana; and perchance the Ephesians speak as often of the destroyer as the architect: so Belzunce listened more to the insinuating voice of delusive hope, than to the less palpable plain truths of his position. He was no Thales to found any particular philosophy by which he might encounter and overcome the storms of life, but he had an innate sense of one of the Ionic doctrines; at least, he paraphrased it, and applied it to himself. Thales said that water was the principle of being, and that God formed all things out of water.

Belzunce believed that God made all things, and ordains all things; no matter what material was first embodied in the chaos; and believing in God's omnipotent power, how could he be devoid of hope? At length his speculations became really aërial, for he was communing with a world invisible; felt, but not seen. After being thus, for some time, occupied with his own imaginings, he tore himself from the home of his childhood, and proceeded on his journey.

CHAPTER VIII.

It is not my intention to follow very minutely Belzunce's footsteps, as he proceeded towards Paris—Paris the city of elegance; then the city of crime. Suffice it, that even to his very liberal mind, the sad state of events seemed worse than report had propagated them to be. On all sides was violence, political fury was at its height, crime was creating its thousand evils, and the young man recoiled from the task his mistress had imposed upon him; he shuddered as he remembered, that he who hath a keen sense of the difference between right and wrong, is guilty of a double offence when he wilfully follows the wrong path. Impassioned as was his love for Charlotte Corday, deeply as he admired the loftiness of her mind, he could not help considering that there was a disease in it; and he was to be the agent, encouraging, rather than curing the malady.

"All, all save my hope of Eternity, I could sacrifice for thee," soliloquized the unfortunate young man; "but this crime, this horrid stain upon my honour—"

Burying his manly face in his hands, he continued

for some time in a deep reverie ; thoughts too solemn, too earnest to record, were passing through his mind in quick succession : and at length he determined to make a last effort towards redeeming his unhappy vow. He had promised to slay Marat if Charlotte wished it ; might she not have changed ? He thought that she might ; and inspired by this too delusive hope, he composed himself sufficiently to pen the following letter:—

My beloved Charlotte,—

The wanderer has reached his destination, and here, in the midst of all the horrors which we scarcely magnified in our conversations, here I am, a prey to most conflicting ideas, vainly striving to nerve myself for the dreadful deed which you have my promise that I will perform. Mistake me not ; I wish not to break my word ; honour, truth, *thy* love are powerful bonds : but *conscience* has a still stronger claim upon me. *Murder !* It is a fearful crime ! Is there not a hereafter, a terrible tribunal of justice ? Cannot God the merciful, become God the avenger ? Yes ! I remember your last words, “you must slay Marat.” It is an easy deed to steep our hands in blood, but it is not so easy to wipe away the stain !

And is it to obtain the hand of *woman* that man should perpetrate such a sin ? Charlotte, it is not to thy fervid imagination I apply, but to the most tender spot of thy female heart.

I have sworn to do thy bidding, and if it still be thy will, I will not flinch from the task I abhor ; I will bear the remorse as a punishment for my rash vow. But though ready to ratify that vow, there is another, a fonder, a dearer plight, and that I will break. Charlotte I will never claim thy hand if I slay Marat. No, I will not make thy whole life wretched, by making thee the companion of one more wretched than thyself. The woman who knew me innocent, shall not associate with me guilty. I will wander alone in the world—I will pray alone in the world, and die alone and uncared for.

Will you, beloved Charlotte ; can you doom me to this ? No, I hope not ; will you not rather trust your destiny with me ? Let us fly to another and a happier clime ; and still in one faith, one love, one tie, await God's dispensation upon our unhappy country. Every hour will seem an age until I hear from you. Farewell, dearest ; Angels keep thy heart, thy decision must be more than life or death to thy adoring

FREDERIC.

Why did a scornful curl of the lip play around Charlotte Corday's mouth, as she read her lover's letter? Had the insidious nectar of revenge so cankered the brighter feelings of the heart with its searching venom?

"Ah!" she exclaimed, "men are wavering creatures; they bow their knees to women, and they change as quickly as the froth disappears from the surface of the wave. Belzunce, how thou hast disappointed me! Around my pillow I have fancied I heard a strange sound, not mystical to me. It was the funeral bell tolling for Marat's death! And I fancied myself standing near thee in my bridal robe, and thy hand was placing on mine the marriage ring; upon that hand I could discern distinctly the tyrant's blood,—and now thou art a faltering poltroon." Alas, Charlotte did not feel that to murder is the greatest act of cowardice.

She tore the letter into fragments, and strewed it on the ground, she then stamped upon the pieces, and laughed aloud: shouting almost maniacally, "a woman's hand will yet do the deed!"

The next morning, when Charlotte descended to the breakfast room, her sedate companion saw a look of fixed determination imprinted upon her young friend's face, it seemed as if she had been schooling herself for

some desperate game.

"I am going home to my mother and father," she exclaimed.

"Must you leave me Charlotte?"

"Must! Yes, yes, it is *must*!" and again Charlotte uttered a sharp painful laugh.

"Has your father recalled you?"

"My father—no, no, my dear friend, I am going to bid them farewell."

"Ah, you will go with Belzunce to another country."

"Perchance I may, but I have much to do at Paris!"

"At Paris!—why girl you are mad—who would willingly go to Paris? They say Marie Aubomette will shortly be guillotined."

"It may be," said Charlotte calmly; "but that does not say that I shall, does it?"

"But surely no one would willingly be near the scenes of such barbarity, the very air of Paris teems with sin,—it is pestilential."

"I know it, I know it, and I shall catch the plague, if so you call it."

"Charlotte, dear Charlotte, do tell me you are joking; do tell me you are trying to see how far my credulity can be imposed on—speak I conjure you."

"I have said all I have to say," replied Charlotte, "and methinks I do not often joke."

"Ah, no!" involuntarily exclaimed her companion, "but how you will sigh for the gay green fields in which you so much delight, how you will sigh for those moonlight rambles, for the waving corn, and the posies red; for my part I hate towns."

"So do I," cried Charlotte fervently; "but ah, there is a charm which leads me to that hateful city, it is a charm you cannot understand."

"You mean the charm of loving."

"I mean, dear friend, the charm of *hating*; but ask me no more questions," said Charlotte, rising hastily; "I will go and make a few necessary preparations before my departure, as well as pay a few farewell visits."

So, so, thought Charlotte's friend, the lovers have quarrelled, that is very clear; and I know not why, but Charlotte's violence terrifies me—she is so given to extremes of character; but why does she think I cannot understand what it is to love? And the good soul who was an old maid, of some forty years standing, began a sort of recapitulatory soliloquy in which she enunciated all the "*caro benes*" for whom her heart

had at different times been moved.

I do not think the history would be at all edifying, as a fortnight or three weeks brought another hero on the tapis ; like the Arabian Nights—"once upon a time there lived," was quickly changed for "so at length there died," and we will now follow the good old maid (for good she was though changeable), to the confessional.

Albeit no Papist, I do not choose to lack any courtesy towards their doctrines, and I will not betray the secrets Mademoiselle Tavannes thought fit to burden the ears of the priest with; but on leaving the church, the said priest accompanied her home.

"*Alma mater*, save Charlotte Corday," muttered the Priest.

"Amen, amen," said Mademoiselle Tavannes, devoutly crossing herself.

"*Vivat post funera virtus*," continued the Priest, "*vite via virtus, virtus sola nobilitat, vincit qui se vincit tu ne cede malis* Charlotte Corday.

Mademoiselle Tavannes did not understand a word but she assured the priest he was quite right.

"How many young hearts are sacrificed to love?" continued the priest, this time in plain French; "Char-

lotte must rise above this."

"I wonder," said Mademoiselle Tavannes, looking down meekly, "whether the devil has any thing to do with love?"

"I dare say he has," said the priest.

"I will never love again," said the lady.

The priest turned away his eyes, perhaps he was smiling; but he once more began "*Deo volente*, Charlotte Corday may love if she likes, but she must not run to Paris after her lovers: I, as *Custos Morum* forbid it."

"I never knew your name was *Custos Morum*," exclaimed Mademoiselle Tavannes.

"Who said it was?" replied the priest, with a shrug, which plainly meant: "what fools women are not to know Latin." "*Custos Morum*, Mademoiselle, means 'the guardian of morality,' and who can say I do not deserve that exalted title?"

"No one," said Mademoiselle de Tavannes, with a sigh of romantic reminiscence; "I am sure when Henri Pierrot was courting me, you counselled me to beware of his moustaches and honeyed words; and I then transferred all my attentions to Jean d'Albret; and when Jean d'Albret whispered to me at church, and

you told me it was a dreadful sin, I changed again for Alfred de Tennis ; and when he went to the Spanish wars and married, I took your advice and forgave him, and did not break my heart ; I am sure I owe you many, many thanks, and I will always call you a '*Couteau Morbleu*'."

"A '*Custos Morum*,'" blandly said the much flattered priest; "not a '*Couteau Morbleu*'."

"I beg your pardon," said the spinster, colouring; "I am no Latin scholar, *ave maria* are the only Latin words I know; oh yes, two others, '*Pater noster*'."

Thus conversing, the pedestrians were at length in view of the pretty house where the unfortunate enthusiast was engaged in arranging her wardrobe, etc. It was a lovely summer day, and Mademoiselle de Tavennes involuntarily exclaimed "who would go to Paris ? Who would leave the charming country ?"

Oh, it was a lovely spot ; there was

"A grey church glimm'ring thro' the dark elm trees ; "

And the bells were even there

"Wandering on the flying breeze "

The meadows were so richly studded, the deeply coloured butter cups glistening in the sun, the hedges were bedight with many wild blooms, and the trees

formed bowers of surpassing loveliness.

“ The yellow camps where humming-bees abound.
By them was to be heard
The well-rope, creaking forth its only sound ;
A little further was
The fairy babble of a road side stream.”

This spot was scarcely “ blasted Eden,” it was a fac simile of Eden itself, but oh how different; for even there, in the quiet dwelling house buried in the garden of pristine beauty, there was a human heart throbbing with quenchless passions ; a heart racking itself with contending emotions.

Unhappy Charlotte, she had a secret warning that it would be long, very long, ere she heard again the sounds of her melodious voice to the accompaniment of the piano, and she was pousing forth her parting strains ; alas, alas, they were very sad.

I WISH I WERE AGAIN A CHILD.

Where is now the holly tree ?
Where the orchards gay and free ?
Where is now the fresh'ning breeze,
Wafted in the summer's trees ?
Here—'tis here—'tis lingering now,
Pressing o'er my feverish brow ;
But oh, it seems not free and wild
As when I roam'd, a gentle child.

CHARLOTTE CORDAY.

Where is now the choral sound,
The groves—the meads—the fragrant ground?
Where is now each festive scene?
Where the fragrant meadow green
Here!—'tis here, in cheering light,
Not for me, its smiles so bright;
Those scenes are not the free, the wild,
As when I roam'd a gentle child,

Friends who charm'd my infancy
Tell me, tell me where they be;
Tell me where the bounding mirth,
Happy gala—joys of earth!
E'en my very natal air
Breathes the languid wind of care;
Oh! would I wander'd free and wild,
And dreamt again I were a child.

CHAPTER IX.

Mademoiselle Tavannes shed some bitter tears as the last chords of music died away, but upon the priest's lips sat a smile more of scorn than pity ; what cared he that Charlotte was a lovely girl, all he knew was little calculated to please him : his harsh, sallow face looked unusually severe, he approached the instrument and said in a coarse voice—

“ Daughter, leave thy paltry pastime and come to me ; Mademoiselle Tavannes, I wish to be alone with this young lady.”

Mademoiselle Tavannes dared not disobey, not even in her own house, and the trembling Charlotte found herself alone with the priest.

She looked furtively at the door as it closed, and her face became deadly pale ; she stood abashed before the man who of all others was least calculated to understand her. He knew nothing of those thoughts which sweeten or embitter the hours of life ; he knew not how delicately the hearts of young maidens should be treated ; he knew not that harshness promotes obstinacy, and threats produce worse evils ; he came to be severely

censorious, and Charlotte felt that to be the case. But her large eyes returned steadfastly the gaze of the priest which was somewhat rudely fixed upon her.

"You are unhappy?" said the priest, half in the tone of a query; "I know you are."

"It requires little penetration to know that," replied Charlotte, struggling to suppress her tears.

"Humph!" exclaimed her interrogator, slightly discomposed; after a pause he continued.—"You have plenty of food and clothes; mendicants alone should be unhappy."

"But kings, reverend Father, are often the most wretched."

"I do not wish to speak of kings," said the priest, as a kind of vision of Marat and Robespierre passed his imagination; "I wish to speak to you, Charlotte Corday. In the first place, let me tell you, it is with pain that I have heard of your usual manner of spending your time, it is fluttering away the energies of life; you are a poet."

Charlotte could not help smiling at the grave accusation.

"*Facit indignatio versum*," she playfully cried, endeavouring to rally her spirits.

"Ha, you understand Latin," cried the now enchanted

priest, who was as proud of his specimens of Latinity as a painter of his brush.

"I merely know a few idioms," said Charlotte modestly.

"No matter," said the Priest; "you know too much for a woman; what business have you to love?—"

"Nay, Reverend Father; you are now joking."

"Interrupt me not, I had not finished my sentence. What business have you to follow your lover to Paris? Is it prudent for one of your tender years? And will it place the nuptial ring on your finger?"

"The nuptial ring!" cried Charlotte, who could not understand the priest; "I am not seeking for a nuptial ring."

"More shame then; your purpose is less holy."

"Accuse not my morality," cried the indignant girl, "or all priestly as you are reverend father, my tongue will hardly keep within respectful bounds. '*Ne sutor ultra crepidence*,' paraphrase the words to yourself holy father, 'let not a priest go beyond his calling'."

"Charlotte," exclaimed the irritated priest, "did I not justly tell you that you knew too much? Forget you then my sacred character? Or rather, know you not it is my duty to enquire into the state of hearts?"

"It may be your duty, reverend father to investi-

gate crime; it may be your duty to disburden the consciences which are laid bare before you : but it is not your duty to trammel them with remorse, where none exists."

"Wherefore say you that you are unhappy if you have no crime in contemplation ? To your years belong mirth, not sorrow."

"I said not that I had no crime in contemplation ; I but prayed you not to attack my moral character in the point of view in which you regarded it just now."

"Charlotte, you are an enigma."

"Perhaps so; wherefore then try to solve my enigmatical character ?"

"Because," persisted the priest, "it is my duty so to do; and within monastic walls your proud spirit shall be curbed."

"You have not the power to force me into a convent," said the undaunted girl.

"You are mistaken, I have ; and I order you not to leave this house until you hear from me."

"Nay, father, I am no weak woman to be cowered by priest, or any living man; God gave woman as free a soul as the master spirit man, and mine shall never be fettered by the shackles of a monastic life—never—never."

The priest turned pale with rage, "fall on your knees," he cried; "fall on your knees daughter of sin, refractory soul erring from the safe fold of the church, repeat as many '*pater nosters*' as I shall enjoin."

"Not one, not a single one," cried Charlotte, whose towering spirit made her wild with anger; "I would not utter a word of prayer now at thy bidding, if it were to save my soul from perdition."

"Dare you blaspheme."

"It is not blaspheming to speak thus to mortal man. I will pray to my maker for pardon, but not to thee—thy misdemeanours are known to me caitiff priest, and thy cowl is as full of sin as the conscience of those beings whom society shun. I will not pray at thy bidding; there are other doctrines save thine, there are other tenets in wise countries than ours, and one creed I firmly believe, the utter uselessness of confessing to priests."

"Ha!" cried the priest, and that single monosyllable rung ominously through the room. "Ha, but I will bandy no more words with one who seems leagued with the evil one. I shall live to be avenged—I shall see thee some day exposed to the punishment thy rashness so richly deserves."

"You are, methinks, prophesying right," said Charlotte.

“priest, reverend father, curse me not; for those who curse suffer often worse tortures than the cursed. Would you add further anguish to a soul burning with dire, unquenchable imaginations; cast no darker shadows over a heart clothed in sorrow—I will not deceive you—it is not love which is cankering my soul. Father, believe you we are called upon to do strange deeds?”

“Daughter, I have said it, and I mean it, I will bandy no more words with thee, thou art a mad enthusiast, and my business is with the sane—I wash my hands from all participation in thy designs, be they what they may; I will see thy face no more.”

The priest walked away, muttering many speeches in Latin lore, whilst poor Charlotte, wrung her hands in grief, exclaiming—

“It must be so, they all call me mad—all, all; some dreadful doom is impending over my destiny; some frightful voice whispers, mine will be the saddest tragedy of life—I cannot turn, I cannot pray; sateless vengeance is brooding at my heart. The cries of orphans and the tears of widows are asking for vengeance, and they shall have it—one blow will end his life, as surely as the executioner’s will end mine. Oh, horrible,” she cried, clasping her lovely throat; “Oh, horrible, it must be dreadful pain—

and then hereafter, when demons shall claim me as a companion, when my salvation shall have been bartered for revenge."

Charlotte Corday, wert thou insane at that moment, whilst the consequences of sin were so rifely set before thee? Nay, I fear not; there was the still small voice of conscience whispering its scarcely heeded tale, and then a picture of calm seemed to fleet before the heated brain—the summer beauty smiled upon the wintry clad heart, but alas, it was all in vain.

Before the close of that day, the excited girl was forced to acknowledge herself ill, and she lay down, her head aching and feverish, vainly courting that repose, which would have brought relief to her heated frame. Whilst still suffering both mentally and bodily, a letter from Belzunce was placed in her hands; she turned deadly pale, "hear, hear," she cried in tremulous accents, to Mademoiselle Tavennes, who was assiduously preparing some of those harmless medicines for the sufferer, known as *tisanes*; "hear how the tyrant Marat has imprisoned Frederic, and sentenced him to death."

"Oh, *pauvre* Monsieur Belzunce," cried the spinster, throwing doown the spoon, "he was so handsome. *Was* he, *is* handsome, why, he is not dead yet."

"But he will die," was the Job comforting answer, "he must die since Marat wills it."

"And suppose there is one who has a stronger will than Marat."

"Robespierre alone has that."

"*Nous-verrons*," was the answer, "but now hear my note."

"Beloved Charlotte,

"Why form we vows on earth, when changeable as the light zephyrs of the wind, are the resolutions of man—why set we our affections on any breathing essence, when the breath with which our vows find utterance belong not to us. Charlotte, four and twenty hours ago, I was a portionless, but a free man, free to wander where I listed—free to indulge in the hope of claiming thee, my bride—now, oh, bitter moment when I trace the words, I am a prisoner; may you, my prized treasure, never know the fiendish horror of imprisonment; may your gaze never wander within the precincts of a dungeon.

"A murderer, shrinking from himself may court the gloom of his prison walls; he may bless the silence which enables him to commune with himself, not with the angry voice of reproaches from without—but I Frederic

Belzunce, feel so differently; my blood turns indignantly at sharing the felon's portion.

"This is my reputed crime:—

"I bought over the Queen's jailor, and obtained access to the unfortunate woman's prison, I followed the impulse of the moment, I wished to ascertain if there might be any service in my power to render her, when, meeting with one of Marat's associates, I forgot all precaution, and spoke in pitying terms of the royal prisoner. I am arrested as a *counter* revolutionist, such being the name given to those who are not yet callous to the voice of pity.

"I must die, for Marat knows only two words in their full meaning, prison and the guillotine. I am not ready to leave the world, I cling to it, even in these troublesome times, and my heart sickens at the approaching doom. Is it true then, that I have gazed upon thee for the last time? have I caught the last sounds of thy tuneful voice—have I seen thy last smile—have I seen thy last tear? If so, farewell, farewell for ever; be good, be virtuous, let us meet again, where I hope and trust to go; let us be united never more to part, before the tribunal on high.

"Go to Adele, my gentle sister, bid her farewell for me; let not thy voice quiver, let scarce a tear dim thine eyes; the dead are sometimes more blessed than the living

Charlotte weep not for me.

“Weep rather for the woes of France; weep for the murdered king; the captive queen, and once again, adieu.

“May all earthly blessings be showered upon thee, but seek not to write to me, I have had much trouble in sending this. It must be the last epistle from

“Your Frederic.”

Charlotte wept passionately, she could have borne death for herself, but she had, by her influence, killed her betrothed; it was at her wild bidding that he sought the city of blood, and how fearfully had his zeal been rewarded; there she lay, weeping, and exclaiming against herself; there she lay, on her couch, her dishevelled locks falling over the pillow, her large eyes swimming in tears, her figure trembling, her head and heart on fire—and the shades of evening were so gently falling, mocking human passions; as they so quietly tinged and subdued the earth. From the open window the pure essence of flowers was emitted, now and then the last note of a bird was heard, the evening bells sounded in gentle harmony, and Charlotte, over whose poetical nature the twilight hour ever wrought a mystical influence, turned her head away from the casement, buried her face in the pillows, and strove to

forget that the earth was lovely.

There are moments when beauty seems (like laughter when we are weeping) to mock us, and we loathe all, save melancholy, such a moment Charlotte Corday now felt, she would fain have invoked a tempest, such as would have assimilated with her own sad heart, Eden would not have been Eden to her in that moment, she felt as if the sword were drawn, and the warning angel's voice was proclaiming her doom, the two edged sword was very piercing, and she felt it to her heart's core.

No starry light broke upon her vision that night. That hand which seemed moulded to rest softly in passive grace, was clenched as if grasping a weapon; the voice from which harmony usually breathed was husky and terrible, whilst dreams too dreadful to record were hovering around during the whole of that dreadful night.

CHAPTER X.

Alone—oh, it is a dreary word,—companionless—it is dreary existence, the poet says :—

“ There is a solitude that lifts the mind
To lofty things.”

Methinks that solitude applies not to the dreariness of prison walls. Unhappy Belzunce, in vain he called to his aid

“ The company of kindling thoughts.”

Alas, his thoughts refused to kindle, like fuel damped by heavy rain refuses to be lighted. He paced up and down his narrow prison walls, and he repassed in view the whole of a young life, which, had been much more strewn with thorns than flowers.

But fortunately, Frederic Belzunce, was in every sense of the word a religious man, he possessed that true, that vital belief in the unfathomable decrees of providence, which fills the heart with pious resignation. After the first bitter burst of grief was subdued, he was almost angry with himself for having given way to it, and he determined to repine no more; he strengthened himself by

many fervent prayers to the throne on high, but, nevertheless, he knew it was a bitter thing to die—to die in the midst of manhood's first years—to die loving, and living in the hope of that love. Poor Frederic Belzunce! he trembled to think of Charlotte Corday's fate; he knew that she was one of those impulsive beings, who are ruined, or elevated by the influence of a moment; he felt that some strange fate awaited her, and if he prayed for himself he prayed much more for her.

Belzunce felt imprisonment so bitterly, for he was a great admirer of nature's beautiful freedom; in the early morning he had been wont to ramble, and he had culled the first dew bespangled flowers, fresh from the bosom of earth.

In the twilight hour, he watched tender blossoms drooping their heads under their green bed of repose, and often he had remained to watch the hemisphere above, become gradually radiant with its myriads of starry gems, and now how dark was the scene, how voiceless the few smoke-dried sparrows who hopped upon the roofs before the narrow window with its hideous iron bars!

And one evening there was a severe thunder storm, so violent that it shook the stern prison with its vibrating clap! Oh, then how thankful was Belzunce that his con-

science was pure, and his thoughts unsullied with sin, for there is some thing in the rolling of thunder, which speaks so forcibly of God, the avenger.

Belzunce could not watch

"The leaves all flutt'ring with insinivtive fears."

for in that dreary court-yard below, not a sign of vegetation was to be seen; but the heavy rain battered against the walls, the thunder rolled, and the lightning streamed in, with its vivid flashes.

The prisoner sighed heavily, when a dead calm succeeded to the noise of the irritated elements, for he knew how beautiful that transition of peace after a storm appears, when we watch the refreshed fields, and listen again to the chirping of birds as they gradually make their exit from their hiding place. He knew how beautiful it is when,

*"Thus the tempest dies, and soft, and still,
The rainbow drops upon the distant hill."*

"Alas, alas," exclaimed Belzunce, "I have, I fear taken my sad farewell of earth, I shall soon perish from off this most changeable world; hark! I hear the evening bell, pealing from some church or monastery—they will never peal my bridal morn, I shall never stand by Charlotte's side, watching the last virgin's blushes tinging her cheeks. Oh, it is sad to die, yet sadder still would it be,

had I a wife left to deplore my death, sadder still had I ever pressed children to my breast in a parental embrace ; none will mourn for me, I am *alone* in the word ; as I before said, the word alone is so dreary, it speaks of morbid thoughts, it tells the tale of an orphan or widow."

Belzunce remembered that his father and mother had both gone to their last rest, then it was that he felt alone: he would have no sad adieu to breathe, and the idea of meeting once more the authors of his being, brought more consolation than any sophistry that language could give.

On the 6th of July, Belzunce stood before the terrible Marat, and he flinched not from his accuser's sardonic expression.

"So, so, citizen," cried the tyrant, "you think we have not enough business on our hands, but must employ our time in chastising refractory youngsters! know you, what citizen Marat's usual punishment is?"

"Full well," replied Belzunce, he sends the offender to the guillotine, and thus adds another to the catalogue of his sins."

"Leave my conscience in my confessor's hands, young hardy, and believe that it is not more tender this day, than for many previous ones, so, be careful in your answers."

"I shall speak the truth, even to thee Marat!"

"Ah, very pretty; so did Louis the king speak the truth; he was a saint, ha, ha, ha."

"Respect the memory of the dead," said Belzunce shuddering.

"I don't agree with you," said Marat, "I pay more respect to the living."

"Marat, pass your sentence on me quickly, it is worse torture than death to listen to thy scoffings, they are worse than thy polluted writings."

"Are you a royalist?" exclaimed Marat, in a voice of thunder, whilst a clerk at his side, stood pen in hand, ready to take down the answer.

"I am grieved for the small share I had in the revolution," boldly replied Belzunce, "and in advocating republicanism, I thought not to see thee my master and accuser."

"Bah, the fellow is jealous," cried Marat, with a scoffing smile, "that is scarcely worthy of death. Speak plainly; are you a royalist? Wherefore, visited you Marie Antoinette?"

"To see a woman in affliction, to aid her, if possible—to restore her to liberty."

"Enough, enough; guard, take back Monsieur Belzunce to the Conciergerie, he dies to-morrow. To-morrow,

let us see; oh, no, the executioner has work enough ; the day after to-morrow; adieu Monsieur Belzunce, *je vous souhaite bon courage.*"

"Monster," cried Belzunce, crimson with many contending passions, "I will not go without cursing thee. Thy crimes shall be returned tenfold upon thee, some day thy dark career will be cut short, thy life will end in violence, and thy sins bring only thy own doom: such a state of things cannot last, France will return to her allegiance, and thy name execrated, branded from mouth to mouth; loathed, detested."

Marat stopped his ears with his fingers, and signing to the guards, left the room.

It mattered not, however, that he pretended to turn a deaf ear to the voice he had just heard; he called for a bottle of wine and indulged copiously, until he thought himself the bravest man in Paris.

"Marie," he cried to his pretty house-keeper, "you do not look in good spirits."

"I think I am," replied she, trying to rally herself.

"Something is amiss, I can see it."

"I had a dreadful dream last night," exclaimed Marie turning pale, and sobbing on Marat's shoulder.

"Tears, Marie, my pretty Marie, never mind thy

dreams, what are they? Are not the Girondins imprisoned, guillotined, or dispersed; nay, nay, wherefore weep?"

"I cannot help it," said Marie, "but no fear, my dream shall not come true; I will keep so vigilant a watch over thee, not a visitor shalt thou receive without my being near."

"Bless thee Marie."

"The priest says I am wicked, do not bless me Marat."

"Right. my blessing is scarcely worth a centime, but weep no more, I cannot bear to see *thee* weep, others may cry till the floor requires not my servant to lay the dust, but do not thou weep."

But telling a woman not to weep, is very often the worst plan, and unable to contain herself the deluded victim of a lawless affection sought her room, and sobbed herself to sleep.

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CHAPTER XI.

IN a pretty bower formed of roses and honey-suckles, sat two very beautiful girls, Adele Belzunce, and Charlotte Corday, they might be compared to morning and night; the one so darkly beautiful, the other so gentle and fair.

Adele had that fragile grace which is above all beauty, her large blue eyes, her fair hair braided under her little cap, (worn by the young girls admitted as novices in the convent) her sylph-like figure, clad entirely in black, the dazzling fairness of her complexion, the drooping of her swan-like neck, all the many charms of her soft voice, and pensive expression, might be compared to morning; whilst Charlotte formed a striking contrast, her full figure, lustrous eyes, and jet ringlets, like night contrasting with the fair morning.

In one respect the young girls were alike, they were both sad, they were both weeping. Adele's face was very pale, but Charlotte's was unnaturally flushed.

It were better that my poor brother should suffer

alone," murmured Adele, "pray, pray, incur not the frightful risk you contemplate."

"I fear not death, sweet Adele."

"But you might encounter worse than death, alone in Paris, surely you will not go?"

"I will not deceive you, gentle one, my purpose is firm, and it is to request that you will remember me in your prayers, that I am here."

"Surely you cannot doubt it, Charlotte—morning, noon, and night, I will pray for you, but I must try and dissuade you from your purpose; what can you do at Paris?"

"Not for worlds dearest one, would I tell you, believe only, that I must go, and let me have thy parting blessing. I shall need to have the echo of some sweet voice sounding in my ears—I shall need to recal kind words and gentle feelings, for I shall be very lonely."

"I do not seek to understand you, dearest Charlotte; I have always loved you, without asking myself if I could have loved you even more; were you like my other young companions, and now, though there is something terrible in the expression of your face, still I love you as ever, very fondly. To some women belong passive submission, I am one of these; I am unhappy, but I would scarcely make

an effort to shake off feelings which have twined themselves in my existence."

"You unhappy Adele."

"*Now*, I am sorrowing for my brother's fate, but at all times I am unhappy; circumstances, not choice, have made me seclude myself from all earthly enjoyment, but I like not this dreary waste of life."

"Poor Adele," said Charlotte, for she could always pity others more than herself. "Poor Adele, make no rash vows, as a refugee, a young orphan, remain here, but make no vows for life. Remember my words, the time is drawing near, when all France will be altered. I shall be no more when you leave these dreary walls, but think of me, and pray for my sins."

"Dearest, my own dearest Charlotte, what morbid thoughts have taken possession of your heart, what terrible plan have you in contemplation? but no, no, no, you must not tell me; I would not think of you in any other light than my good, my virtuous friend."

Charlotte Corday burst into tears.

"Adele," she exclaimed in passionate accents, half choked with sobs, "it is these moments I dread, it is when I hear gentle ones like thou art recoil at vice, that I tremble to think the day may come when you can no longer love

me. Judge not as the world judges, friend of my infancy,
companion of my early days mix the herb of compassion,
in every dose of worldly mixing, remember me, when as
children we played and sung together; ah, those days are
gone—gone, never more to return.

Farewell, dear friend farewell,
Those merry days are o'er,
In tears and sobs, Ade'e,
We part to meet no more.

Like the whirlwind flitting by,
Like sand upon the sea,
Swift comes the lullaby
To all our youthful glee.

Like clouds which flow so fast,
Of every shade and hue,
Thus fleets the weary past,
But *lasts* the word "Adieu."

And thus in memory
The past recal to mind,
To my full misery :
Oh be thou ever blind.

Farewell, dear one farewell,
T'is bitter thus to part,
But ever kind Ade'e,
Oh, bear me in thy heart's

"Thou art shrined there for ever," cried the affectionate
Adele, throwing herself into Charlotte arms, and joining
her tears to her friend's. "Oh, how often I have listened

to the cadence of thy words as they fell as now, in measure and grace; I *will* be blind to all save thy goodness, and I will keep thee as now, near and dear to my heart—but this farewell need not be for ever; God is merciful, he will watch over you, and I shall pray, oh, how fervently. Once more, turn from your purpose, though I *will* not blame you, I cannot understand your feelings. Save my own brother, I have never loved any man.”

Charlotte blushed very deeply; she saw that as the priest had misunderstood her, so did Adele. She saw how very difficult it would be to convince the world, that apart from the mere fact of her lover being imprisoned, she had long, long nurtured the plan, she was on the point of executing; she could not be angry with one so guileless as Adele, so she dried her tears, and she talked in a firmer voice, as if the very conviction of being ill-judged lent strength to her purpose.

“Hark!” said Adele, “that is the first bell summoning us to prayers; I must leave you ere the last has sounded, and it tolls only three times, we have only a few moments to be together.”

And these last moments were spent locked in each other's arms, neither having courage to utter the heart breaking words of farewell.

Presently, Adele Belzunce was kneeling by the side of her gentle nun companions, and Charlotte Corday, drawing down her veil over her swelled face, retraced her steps home.

Other trials were before the intrepid girl; her mother's anger, her father's protestations, that she would come to ruin and desolation; and poor Charlotte, virtuous in all, save that one, sin, which an overwrought imagination caused her to commit; left her home with words ringing in her ears, as obnoxious to her feelings, as lacerating to her heart.

CHAPTER XII.

Readers, I have pondered for some time pen in hand, and I feel how truly beyond all description, at least beyond sufficiently forcible description, are the feelings of a condemned man as he stands in his narrow cell. Dense is the blackness of the thoughts—heavy are the drops standing upon the cold brow, the bravest heart feels quelled, the strongest nerves feel shaken.

Ah, it is in such a moment that the world is fair, it is when it seems receding from man's grasp, that it is clung to with greatest pertinacity. It is wrapt in a halo of beautiful semblances; the world then seems poetry. Charmed with many illusions, it matters not that some reminiscences are mournful; sadness then seems hallowed beauty, the regrets which *have been* are *past*, the *future* perchance would have been so brilliant.

Thus thought poor Belzunce when the firm bolts were drawn upon his prison door, and his jailor's footsteps were at length echoless in the long passages. Death—

hollow-eyed death was now before him.

Many links, scarcely dreamed of before, now seemed to rise and chain him to life ; he felt the warm blood of youth flowing in his veins, and he saddened at the thought, that the stream must soon be tarried.

And then, oh hideous thought; not to die on a bed soothed by the prayers of friends, not to recline upon the breast of the loved one, the chosen; but to be the mark for thousands of curious spectators to cast their eyes upon—to have his name sounded from mouth to mouth—to die the death of a murderer—alas, how degrading. Poor Belzunce, there was no occasion to summon a false display of courage in that lonely prison; one, and one only could see him there, and that one was Jehovah the merciful, Jehovah the compassionate. The Saviour wept as he gazed on mortal man's tomb, then surely it is a solemn thing to die. Flow then ye tears, flow on, they temper the pain of thy heart—weep Frederic Belzunce, God keeps thee in his care

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Exhausted, Frederic slept; poor, poor, young man, he had fallen so gently to rest upon his hard couch, as softly as a babe is pillowed near its mother's bosom. Suffering was imprinted upon his lofty brow, and the glistening

drops were yet dewy upon the long lashes, his mouth was parted, perchance a prayer was trembling upon it when he dropped off to sleep—and he had such a beautiful dream, a dream so full of hope—he started up at length, and a smile flickered round his pale face. “Can it be possible, am I not to die,” he exclaimed, “oh, great God take pity on me, there is nothing impossible to thee, the night is not dark, the day is thine. Let me not die this dreadful death, oh, spare my life—spare it yet a little while, let me love thee more, let me be thy humble servant, thy grateful creature; let me live a little longer, for I love this earth which thou hast formed,” * * *

The sound of the door being unbarred, interrupted Frederic's devotions, he thought it was only his rough jailor, but he was mistaken, a young and very beautiful female stood before him.

“Do you remember me?” she said.

“No, not at all,” replied Frederic.

“Those who confer an obligation may forget,” said the fair girl, (for she could hardly be more than nineteen) “but the obliged party cannot so soon obliterate the gratitude which is their's to feel. Do you remember some days ago, rescuing a young woman from the insolent love-making of a gallant of Robespierre's train? I am that

young woman, and I am come to serve you. Listen to me, I am engaged to be married to your jailor's son, and I learn all the prison news, I asked you to give me your name when you rescued me, and I had no difficulty in remembering it, when George told me you were imprisoned, for I have mingled your name in my prayers. Now I can repay my debt; you must clothe yourself in this coat, and place this hat on your head, I have procured you the passport of a French valet, who was to follow his master to England. Poor fellow, he was seized with illness and died. Make haste, I will retire for a few seconds; equip yourself quickly, not a moment is to be lost."

"I dare not place you in any difficulty."

"Oh, do not think of me; George will bribe the executioner to say that you were killed early in the morning in a spare ten minutes he had, such is often the case; make haste; I beseech you, make haste!

Oh, how tremulous felt Frederic, he had almost suffered the pangs of death, in the torturing thoughts he had lately endured, and now the sudden turn of his fortunes almost bewildered him: yet the peremptory call for haste accelerated his movements, he was not long at his toilet, and after a short but fervent prayer, he followed his sweet conductor. Her heart palpitated with joy at having returned

her debt of gratitude, and Belzunce felt how often a good action brings its own reward.

How beautiful was the freshening wafting of the air as Frederic proceeded further and further from the prison, whilst the young maiden by his side seemed to say *veni, vidi, vici*, for though she did not say a syllable, she nodded and smiled to the various soldiers at their post, and she passed with her companion dressed en valet, as if none dared dispute her sway.

Truly, every grade in life carries with it its share of importance, and the intended bride of George, the jailor's only son, was of some consequence in that dark abode. For a few moments Belzunce felt inclined to ask the gentle girl, how she could chain her destiny to one engaged in that dark fearful calling, but he remembered, he had no right to question the foundation upon which her heart had rested its happiness, and moreover, he had the philosophy to believe that a man is not to be judged according to his calling, neither had he observed anything reprehensible in his late guard's conduct, he therefore contented himself with expressing all the gratitude he felt.

"*Asser et bien de trop, mon beau monsieur,*" interrupted the French girl, with all the naive familiarity peculiar to her French extraction. "I pray you keep a few words

in store for another occasion, you may be in prison again."

"Oh, I hope not," said Belzunce, looking furtively round.

"Nay, there is not even the shadow of a jailor here, and Marat has gone to one of the provinces, so he cannot possibly be near you."

"Must I go to England," sighed Frederic.

"Oh, you men are so strange, you think exile worse than death. But England is a beautiful place, you will be happy there—I could be happy anywhere, I think I shall sing and laugh all my life, but then, I love eorge."

"Precisely so, my good girl, but then, suppose I love some one."

"*Cela se pourrait il?*" said the French girl in a query.

"Yes," answered Belzunce."

"Give me the direction of your *chere amie*," said the girl, "I will write to her; you must not stop now. Write to me when you are safe—here are all your *ci devant* papers, you are to call yourself Jean Pierrot, and you are seeking your master Colonel Clifford; do you understand?"

"Perfectly, how very, very kind, you are."

"Have I not told you I am only paying my debt, now see, there is the diligence, now speak a little provincially, and kiss me on both cheeks when you part with me, or it will not look half *en caractere de valet*, ha, ha, ha, how jealous poor George would be."

Belzunce did as he was bid, and the French girl received her double embrace with the most simple complacency, trifling as the circumstance may seem, those who have ever observed the greeting between a French valet and a soubrette (pardon gentle readers for supposing you have) will readily own that there was tact in the kissing compact.

"Remember me to all my fellow-servants," said the girl; "do not forget Marie and Jeanne, and now there's a good fellow, take care of your master's wigs, you know he is very particular, but you have a good place."

"Ha, ha, ha, take care of his wigs," repeated a young moustachiod gallant, redolent with *creme a la Reine*, I was going to say, (but I mean *creme a la republique*) and *eau de Cologne*, "ha, *sieur valet*, whither go you?"

"To Calais," answered Belzunce, frowning as valets ought *not* to frown.

"Who is your master?"

"I never speak in a diligence," said Frederic, "I imi-

tate my betters."

"You do quite right, Jean," said the French girl, who had remained by the side of the diligence, "and I advise you to go to sleep, for you will not sleep on board, and in England your master keeps you up late."

And away went the diligence, away went the French girl, looking as light as if she had just been to a pleasure excursion, instead of escorting a prisoner from his approaching doom.

Not so, Frederic Belzunce, he was a Frenchman, without a single spark of their national vivacity, his life had been so clouded, that he rarely mounted the aerial clouds, which never shone one hour but to threaten the next, and even now he felt less glad than awed, thankful; very grateful, but scarcely elevated.

Was he not leaving his native land? Was he not leaving Charlotte Corday? Yet she loved him with the sanction of her parents, and surely they would meet again. No matter, what is the use of unravelling the delicate whys and wherefores, which buoy or sadden a reflective mind. Belzunce pretended to sleep, but he was deep, deep in thought, very much tinged with sadness. He felt weak too, his strength had quite given way before the violence of his grief, his spirits had bowed

in the struggle to meet the end he anticipated, and now though the stern prison walls no more frowned upon him, still a subdued feeling he could not shake off, unnerved every pulse.

He was an orphan, leaving behind him even the sympathy of national kindred thought ; sad enough to depress the heart.

But still Frederic forgot not, that he stood as it were one step only between the living and the dead, he prayed silently but long, he thanked the Almighty, he remembered how he had besought that his life might be spared, and how his prayer was answered.

Long before he reached England, therefore, he had come to the conclusion, at which many of his countrymen at that unfortunate period, were forced to arrive, namely, that exile is preferable to death.

Besides which he found that everything he had heard relative to the hospitality of the English was perfectly correct, they were receiving exiled Frenchmen with open arms, and Colonel Clifford, to whom he presented himself, in order to tell him of the fate of his servant, not only received him, but took him under his roof, cancelling the obligation by calling him his secretary, and poor Frederic readily fancied that English Colonels

might require such a person, although four letters a year to a married sister, constituted the whole of the correspondence, in which the Colonel entered.

But Frederic was suddenly taken very ill, and we must for the present leave him surrounded with a heap of phials, pill boxes, and kind attendants.

CHAPTER XIII.

Adele Belzunce and her gentle sister nuns were enjoying a walk in the enclosed ground skirting the convent, in which much female beauty and grace were immured. Some were walking in groups, others two and two, but Adele was quite alone.

She had no communion with souls trammeled with bigotry; she believed that the beautiful earth was intended to be more largely enjoyed, and she looked forward with anxious longing, to the period when she might leave the seclusion she could not like, whilst her companions, whose minds had been earlier trammeled with the cold sophistry of bigoted priests, turned away in fear from discourses upon freedom, which they neither wished for nor understood.

Not only, therefore, Adele Belzunce was solitary, but though she was gentle and kind, she had not one companion to call her friend. Liberty was generally the theme of Adele's thoughts, but doubly so, when she longed to know more of her brother's fate, and her young friend

Charlotte would no more pay her the welcome visits, which so much cheered the youthful recluse. A dark veil was thrown over that enthusiastic girl's intentions. Adele shuddered when she remembered that sad parting, there was such a restlessness in that dark eye; such a fearful tremour in her voice; what could be the object of her journey to Paris?

And then Adele remembered how assiduously she had been guarded when in her parent's life time, she had been annually taken to the gay capital; she was then very young, and could hardly understand the nature of the dangers from which she was guarded, but now, instinctively, she learned that no young woman, beautiful as Charlotte Corday, could be safe in that city so filled with every possible vice.

How changed were the times—how it seemed to Adele like a false dream, that she had ever been the petted daughter of an aristocratic father. Alas, who cared for her now, even the abbess who protected her, would alter her conduct if her brother were no longer near to see to her welfare; and how scalding were the bitter tears which fell from her eyes, at the recollection, that the days of that beloved brother would perchance be cut short.

Frederic Pelzunce had distinctly informed the abbess,

that he would not allow his sister to take any vows, and the abbess knowing that France would soon return to allegiance to a sovereign, (and that then the families of the ancient regime would be restored to affluency) was too speculatively alive to the future, not to pay implicit obedience to the young officer's orders, and accordingly as much liberty as could be enjoyed in that solitary abode, fell to the share of Adele.

When the sonorous bell summoned the nuns within the walls of the house, she might still linger, and as the breeze of evening fanned her fair cheeks, and her tearful eyes were turned to the beautiful skies, she looked like some visitant from a holier world than ours, yet every thought in that beautiful head was perfectly terrestrial.

So gentle, so holy, were those young imaginings, she associated heaven and earth together, until she persuaded herself that vice could scarcely dwell in the latter; alas, she knew not how bitter her pilgrimage might perhaps be.

How fair seems the valley which youth calls the world, how looking down upon it, young hearts see only flowered meads, and babbling streams, and is that the world which they are cautioned to beware of?

Alas, alas, noxious plants, poisoned weeds, often bear

the semblance of beautiful flowers, and the streams of life may widen until the ocean of strife suddenly opens before us.

One evening, Adele wandered longer than usual, and when she returned to the house, she was going, as was her wont, to make use of the privilege she enjoyed, of sitting with the abbess, when she started on the threshold of the door, for she heard the sounds of a masculine voice.

It was the first time any deep, manly voice, save that of her brother's, had broke upon her ears in those walls, and the young girl timidly retired in the adjoining room.

The walls separating the apartments, were so thin, that Adele could not help hearing every syllable which passed, and she stood at length as pale as monumental marble, chained as it were to the spot.

"Surely citizen," said the abbess, (and Adele felt that even *her* voice trembled) "surely you will not be cruel to the innocent lambs."

"Have I not told you my intention," was the reply, "the ancient noblesse of France are seeking other countries; their daughters are left in convents, but I will have it publicly known, that they must return and claim their children. We require the countenance of other men save

the rabble, and the proud refugees shall not leave their country at so easy a price."

"But you will not citizen Marat, infringe monastic decorum."

"Keep all your black veiled nuns Lady Abbess, I wish to have a list of the recluses who have not taken vows in your house."

"Citizen Marat, upon my honour and word, I have only one young person to whom I extend my protection, and she is young and gentle, you must use violence before you obtain her, and that you will not be cruel enough to do."

Suddenly the door was thrown open, and Adele, like a sunbeam in a storm, rushed in the room, and throwing herself on her knees before Marat, she clasped her hands, exclaiming—

"Save my brother, Marat, and let me die in his stead; Oh save him, and take my life."

"Take your life—impossible," cried Marat, raising the beautiful girl, and gazing at her as if he had never looked at anything beautiful before. "By all the Saints, I would not harm a hair of thy silken tresses."

And as he spoke, Adele with a face covered with blushes, replaced those tresses under the neat cap from

which they had strayed.

"Do, do, do, grant my petition," she said, "my brother has never harmed any one, and he likes to be quite free, I can die, if you please."

"Why, you are almost buried alive here," said Marat, "would you not like to leave this convent?"

"Very much indeed," replied the imprudent girl."

"Hush, hush, silly Adele," cried the abbess, drawing her away from Marat, "know you, that no tardy tears can wash away the folly of this moment—recal your words, I beseech you."

"It is too late Madam," said Marat, "Mademoiselle Belzunce shall not be detained against her will."

"She has no will, she is too young to judge for herself," said the abbess, "leave her here citizen ; I know you well—I know your foul heart, your caitiff purposes. Sooner would I follow a child of mine to the grave, than leave her one hour with thee. May every curse light upon you, Marat, if you injure that fair girl."

"Oh, I am accustomed to curses," said Marat.

"But they will, they shall light upon you," said the abbess. "Oh Adele, Adele, see now what you have done! You will come to a dreadful end, my poor child."

"I fear not death," said Adele, "I love my brother

better than myself, and if I lose him, I lose my only friend."

"Obstinate girl," said the abbess, "nay, I must not deceive you, know that a look from the man upon whom you are gazing, is * * *

"Hold, madam, hold," cried Marat, and he once more advanced towards Adele "The lady has it in her interest to keep you here. I will take you to Paris, restore you to your former station, and deliver up your brother ; are such motives base and wrong?"

"Oh, no, no, no," said Adele, "I am ready to follow you; I would peril my life to save my brother."

"Leave me only half an hour with Adele," said the abbess, "delicacy forbids my speaking before you, but I will inform her of all your reckless daring."

"Nay, nay, kind lady," said Adele, "I know what you would say—that it is bold and unmaidenly to go alone with this gentleman ; but do not you hear what he promises, and Paris is not very far off—can I possibly hesitate, must I let my brother perish?"

"Poor deluded child, can you not see that your presence cannot be necessary to your brother's deliverance."

"Oh, yes, let me fall in his arms, and be the first to tell him he is free. I feel so happy already, and this gentle-

man will allow my maid to travel with me."

"Certainly," said Marat, "but I will give orders that your comforts be duly attended to. I must bear you hence at once."

"So soon," said Adele.

The abbess heard no more, she uttered a piercing scream and fainted.

A few hours after that scene, Adele was away from her young companions; her maid was sitting by her side in a private carriage, and the poor girl was repeating again and again, I shall save my brother.

CHAPTER XIV.

Charlotte Corday was now in Paris, where she took up her abode at the Hotel de Providence, and her whole time was occupied in fruitless endeavours to find out Belzunce's prison. Marat had given such strict orders that no questions should be answered relating to such demands, that Charlotte was repulsed, sometimes, even rudely, and a pang of horrible conviction stole over her heart, for she believed her lover had perished.

"I will not survive him," exclaimed the wretched girl, "but I will be revenged before I die."

Bold and undaunted as she was, still Charlotte trembled at the word revenge, for a woman's spirit, though differing in its outpourings, is nevertheless filled with some gentle feelings; and Charlotte Corday shed many a scalding tear, as she pronounced the word revenge.

"A moment is a mighty thing,
Beyond the soul's imagining."

Ah, surely it is, and there was one moment in Charlotte's life, which she had never contemplated viewing—

the fatal moment when she purchased a murderous weapon.

What business had such an instrument in the hands of a woman? could she handle it? could she look at it?

She could—she placed it on a table before her, she examined it with absorbing interest, and she turned it over and over.

At first she handled it unsteadily, but at length it became familiar to her touch. Oh, thought she, could Belzunce see me in this moment; he has kissed that hand, now grasping this murderous weapon.

Charlotte Corday—wondrous, inexplicable girl, others have committed crime—scarce any so sensitively alive as thou wert to its horrid consequences, the letters still remaining penned by thee, show that thou wert scarcely insane. We pity, we blame, we are angry with ourselves for pitying, and still we find ourselves wrapt in

“The sadness of a thousand spirit-lyres.”

Unhappy girl, would that some gentle recollections of thy innocent days of childhood had deterred thee; would that once more softer thoughts replaced those which heated like the volcano's fiery brands, ever burning and searing—scorched for ever the soil of a mind, at once lofty and too weak to turn from so horrid a deed.

Murder—yes, Charlotte no longer viewed the word at

a distance, she held it most distinctly before her eyes, she wept, she prayed; she paced up and down the room, but still she contemplated the word *murder*.

And still we pity that unhappy girl; her's was no wanton heart naturally cruel, but the mind was blighted, and that mind was playing with the heart. Alas, alas, she sat alone in her chamber, unlaunted, unscathed by the vision before her

"The silent walk, the sickly moon,
And melancholy sky."

They brought no reflective repentance, and yet Charlotte walked abroad when the earth was dark, and the walks deserted; not even Belzunce was now near to share those very burning thoughts, the poor enthusiast might have exclaimed—

"And now I am alone again,
With feelings undefined;
A pilgrim in a world of pain,
An unpartaken mind."

And often Charlotte roamed near Marat's abode; she looked up at the windows, and she turned back and fled.

"Not yet, not yet," she would say, "yet a short time shall elapse. Oh God, forgive me, forgive me."

Having received letters from various Girondins, she soon became acquainted with Barbarou, Duperret,

Fauchet, and several other leaders of that party, but to none did she explain her purpose, generously determined to suffer alone the consequences of the deed she contemplated.

All the persons who became acquainted with her, were much struck with her appearance, and she excited admiration ; though as usual towards her, that sentiment was so much joined with respect, that she remained unmolested in the large capital.

Little thought Charlotte, that by a strange fatality the gentle Adele was suffering worse anguish than herself; little did she imagine that when she looked up at the high house near Marat's abode, in one of them a lovely girl was the victim of Marat's deep treachery.

After many restless nights, on the 12th of July, Charlotte arose, and drawing near a table, wrote a letter to Marat, in which she declared her ability of being able to disclose a plot, if she could obtain an interview with him.

To this letter she received no answer ; and with a scornful curl of wounded pride, she wrote another of a more personal nature, declaring herself very unhappy, and protesting that she would rely upon his politeness not to refuse admittance to a young female in distress.

On the 13th she presented herself at the tyrant's abode; and she was soon in the presence of the man she abhorred with hate, quenchless as incomprehensible.

Never had Charlotte looked more beautiful, as standing before her victim, he gazed upon her with all his wonted impudence towards women, and still sitting down himself drew her to a chair by his side.

Oh, what a cold shiver ran through Charlotte's frame; her hands were powerless, as Marat took them within his own, and lowering his voice, begged she would disclose her sorrow.

"Such eyes should never weep," he said; "such cheeks should never lose their bloom; confide in me, all will be well."

"You are in more danger than I am, citizen," said Charlotte.

"Ah," said Marat, smiling, "conspiracies again, but never mind my lovely protecting angel, many thanks only for your devotion to me," and Marat wound his arm around her waist.

And even that liberty, the first of the kind Charlotte had ever received, was not resented, for the very power of moving had deserted her.

There was a silent pause. Marat was gazing upon her

pale, but very lovely face ; her eyes swimming in tears rested on the ground, one of her hands was within his grasp, and she could not find courage to move.

At length Marat's lips parted, and the warm blood mounted to Charlotte's temples, as she heard the tyrant's whisper.

The next moment his polluted lips were pressing her's ; alas, it was the crisis. Swiftly with her disengaged hand, she drew forth a dagger from the folds of her dress, and plunged it into Marat's heart, whilst his eyes still upraised to hers, suddenly closed in pain, and with a piercing shriek he fell at Charlotte's feet. * * *

* * * * *

The deed is done, she is cursed, she is loathed, thousands are uttering her name; even in other lands it will sound; she is trampled on, hissed, conducted to prison.

No more will be heard the rich tones of the cheerful voice of youth—old, quite old, feels a guilt stained heart; no more will she wander forth freely, all earth's joys are at an end.

Ah! she pray's! but that prayer is hardly then a boon; she prays for her own death, and how sad is such a request from the lips of so young a creature. Poor Charlotte Corday, was it for this dreadful end, that a mother's

lips had pressed hers, when she hung a listless babe near that mother's side. Oh now, she was so wretched, and so comfortless, and none were near to comfort her. Her dress was soiled with murdered blood, her face was sometimes deadly pale, sometimes preternaturally flushed; her heart was at times very sunken, then again ready to bear her through the last trial of her life; but no tears came to her relief—the murderer was suffering the first poignant anguish of crime.

CHAPTER XV.

Adele Belzunce was dangerously ill, a delirious fever was preying upon her intellects; her fair tresses were shaved, her cheeks were pale and hollow, her breath was quick and hot, her thin hands grasped the coverlet; and it was Marat the destroyer, who had committed the devastation.

Poor Adele, for a very short time she had been deceived, but it was a period sufficiently long to deprive her of reason, when she found that the marriage ceremony had been performed by a false priest, and that she had sacrificed herself to save a brother, who was already beyond the reach of the tyrant's power.

What cared she now, that she was tossed with fever; she only wished to hide her head, away from the sight of the world, which might censure her; she had understood the words of the abbess when too late, and now in the delirium of fever, she repeated them over and over again; and she raved fearfully against Marat.

"He is coming, he is coming," she would exclaim. "save me from him, do not let him come near me, Take me back again to the convent, I must go, I cannot abide here."

But she was forced to abide, for she was very ill, her strength daily declined ; like some fair plant upon which the wind had too roughly blown, she was bowing her head to the destroyer's stroke.

It is so bitter to grow wise in the school of misfortune but such was Adele's lot; and when she recovered at length, not her health but her reason, she had learned poor girl, to blame Marat less than herself.

"How could I follow him to Paris; how could I place myself in his power? Oh, fearfully has he played upon me. I have nothing left now but to die." She tore the false ring from her finger, and snapped it to atoms.

"Thus may every type of his treachery perish," she cried; "but alas, upon my faded countenance there are indelible traces left."

Not so indelible as the traces left on the heart, poor girl; a few months might restore the roscate tint to the pale cheeks, the energy to the sunken eye, but the tale of disappointment sinks to the very core of a maiden's

heart, when it has been wantonly deceived.

Oh then in such a moment, how warmly the voice of a friend sounds upon the ears; and when the kind physician told how he had watched, when the inconstant Marat had deserted her he had betrayed; when he added with tears in his eyes, that he felt towards her as if she were his child. Adele opened her large blue eyes, and fixed them so wistfully on the physician's venerable face; they seemed in their expressive gaze to say—"could you too deceive me?"

"You have been sadly duped," said Monsieur Duchamp, in answer to the pleading look; "but I will protect you, you must come to my house, my wife will be very kind to you."

"Oh, how generous of you to speak so," cried Adele, "for I seem so very imprudent. I hate Marat—but though I knew it was very wicked to marry without love, I could not sacrifice my poor brother, and I was trying to be reconciled to my fate; when a young woman sought me, and informed me with unwomanly triumph that I was as much Marat's dupe, as she was his willing victim; she dared to accost me as a partner in guilt. Oh, odious thought, I who would have died, but never erred willingly—now can you forgive me?"

"I can not only forgive, but I can tell you that you are avenged ; the tyrant is dead ; Marat exists no more, a young woman murdered him : poor creature, perchance she also may be one of his victims."

"Tell me, I beseech you, tell me her name," said Adele, turning if possible paler than her fair cheek had been lately.

"Her name is Charlotte Corday."

"Oh gracious heavens ! I feared it was her ; pray, pray, think no more of me, I am more culpable than Charlotte, though she be stained with murder. Go, go, try and save her ; do not let her die a criminal's death ; go, as you would hope to have the same mercy shown to you ; leave me, go to poor Charlotte."

"Alas, alas, I could not obtain access to her prison and besides, it was with difficulty that the populace refrained from tearing her to pieces. I will not deceive you, Charlotte Corday's fate is certainly sealed. But do you know her personally?"

"She was my school-fellow," said Adele, and there was something so girlish in the reply ; it was such a mournful contrast between the position of both the girls now, that the good physician felt the tears of sympathy starting to his eyes.

"You weep," said Adele; "bless you for those tears, and I too wish I could weep copiously. Oh, have I ever been a gay young school girl? Yet now do I remember Charlotte, so buoyant, so merry, swaying every one according to her will. Never can we tell what fruit the blossom will bring forth; poor Charlotte, the blossom of thy earliest days seemed now blighted."

"I must see Charlotte once more," continued Adele.

"You would not be able to bear the trial."

"Believe me I should; oh, procure me if possible, the interview."

"I will do all I can," said the physician, "but my only chance rests with your being stronger the day after to-morrow, when the poor girl is to be received for a private examination, to consult as to her sanity, and I may be admitted as I know one of the consulting doctors."

Adele required no more, she took the draught which was offered her. The attendant shook her cushion, and she was soon hushed to sleep. Her fair brow unadorned by a single lock of those profuse silken tresses (which Adele had been wont to find so troublesome in managing in plain bands under her novice cap) that sweet brow was now only adorned with a little muslin cap; but as she lay in sleep, her face had something angelic in the

expression, it was almost childishly lovely in the soft repose; who would have thought that the first waking sound from those lips, would be a sigh.

When youth utters the first sigh of real grief, how it looks back scoffingly upon the many, hitherto heaved without any reason. "Unreasonable girl that I was," thought Adele, "I used to sigh to mix in the world, when I dwelt in that beautiful retreat in Normandy; alas, alas, now I have cause to sigh." Then she thought of the abbess, and of her gentle sister noviciates; how she wished that the bell, she had once thought so monotonous were sounding upon her ears; how she wished the highest wall enclosed her, but it was too late.

Her brother—what would he think of her? Yet it was to save him she had sacrificed herself. She almost hoped she might never see his face more, for she was no longer his guileless young sister. At length tears did, as the poor sufferer wished, fall copiously, and her delicate frame shook under the heavy burst of that much needed relief.

Having wept for herself, Adele then wept for poor Charlotte—what dreadful fate was hers, and how little had the young murderer's previous life given reason to expect such a catastrophe. Adele remembered how in

affliction, Charlotte had ever a mind of sympathy ready to display itself in behalf of her friends—how often the towering mastery of her own lofty spirit had lent strength to her companions' weaker intellects. How fervently, how enthusiastically Charlotte had conversed on all religious topics, how she willingly confessed herself in error, and ever atoned for an offence; it seemed indeed as if the evil one had said—

“ I plotted---tempted—and the earth born sinks,
From heaven's embrace, into the arms of hell.”

“ We ought not to judge,” thought Adele, “ but I have always been taught great is the punishment of murderers; though our nature is fallen and corrupt, murder is one of those heinous sins which make angels shudder, and devils tremble.

Yet blame not Adele gentle readers, though she pitied Charlotte more than censured; it is better to have too much of the essence of human forgiveness, than too much of its harshness.

Often the two friends had spoken of death, of that calm last slumber; that last breath drawn amidst the sobs of friends, and the prayers of the righteous, and then their youthful gaze had been carried further, they had pierced the realms of light, they had drawn aside the cur-

tain of eternity; (as far as we can draw it aside) and they had contemplated *future* life, and now it was no longer Adele's lot

"To paint the hour that wafts a soul to heaven."

She dare not draw aside that once approachable curtain; she feared yet longed to penetrate the mysteries of *forgiveness*.

"While heaven in miniature before him shines."

Man dare contemplate death—but when the gaze meets a darker goal, it is on the merciful forgiveness of an offended God the eye turns with suppliant request. If ever fervent prayers were breathed to the throne on high, they were uttered then by Adele Belzunce on behalf of her poor erring friend, and when her own lovely head was propped with soft cushions, she thought of poor Charlotte—

"Within a dungeon, mildew'd by the night,
Barr'd from salubrious air, and cheering light."

Was such really the fate of she who possessed Cornille's lofty love of nature's freedom, of she who loved so

"To breathe, and live, and move, and be as free,
As nature is, and man was made to be."

"Alas, yes, even now, such was Charlotte's midnight couch; the hard bed of a dungeon, when midnight brings

its train of thoughts—of what was the erring one thinking? When others were basking in the sun-shine of smiles, was there even the shadow of one on that youthful countenance? No.

CHAPTER XVI.

It is impossible to tell how long the dreadful idea of dipping her hands in gore, and committing so heinous a sin, had taken possession of Charlotte Corday's mind ; let us view her conduct in any point of view we please—let us view it, (as the present century denominates murder)—a monomania for blood—*murder it was*, and as a murderer was Charlotte Corday tried. The word galled her very soul, but she knew she deserved it.

Marat was a tyrant, a licentious man, a demon on earth ; but the act of killing him was the act of murder, and much as we pity Charlotte's youth, much as we feel for her beauty being laid low ; still readers, were it to mar all the previous expressions of pity towards her, uttered by Adele Belzunce, as a crime of deep die ; we are properly to look upon Charlotte's conduct as a sin, and she herself, undaunted as she was, had never a moment's wish to deny the crime.

I have read passages in works in which slaying a *tyrant*, seems to lessen the actual crime ; there is, me-

thinks, an evident discrepancy in the *moral* point of such an argument.

There is repentance for sinners, even at the eleventh hour, and who could tell, whether Marat's old age, would not have been holier than his manhood? What right then had Charlotte Corday to cut off the thread of the tyrant's existence? Alas, it was now too late to think like this, and Marat had breathed his last.

Were not this an historical tale, founded as my readers know—on facts, it would have been a pleasure to make use of the license of fiction to pourtray Charlotte's repentance, but her letter to a citizen named Barbarou, will shew her feelings at this awful period, and I here copy it as the truest evidence of a mind, which no trouble could quell into subjection.

“ Citizen,

“ You desired a narrative of my journey, and I shall not pass over the smallest anecdote.

“ Arrived at Paris, I went to lodge in Rue des vieux Augustines, in the Hotel de Providence; I there waited on Duploret your friend, and I do not know how the committee of general safety could learn that I had a conference with Duploret.

“ You know the firmness of soul which the latter is

possessed of; he answered the truth—I confirmed his depositions by my own ; there is nothing against him ; but his firmness is a crime—I own I was under apprehension. I persuaded him to go and join you ; but he was too headstrong ; I resolved, therefore, upon the execution of my plan.

“Fauchet, (could you believe it ?) is in prison as my accomplice, he who did not know that I existed ; but they are hardly contented that they have but an insignificant woman to sacrifice to the *manes* of the *great man*. Pardon, ye men, that name disgraces your respect, it was a ferocious beast, who was going to consume the rest of France with the fire of civil war. Now, long live peace—thanks to heaven he was not born a Frenchman.

“Four members of the National Convention were at my first interrogatory. Chabot looked like a madman ; Lequedre, expected to have seen me at his house this morning. I never thought of this man ; I believe his resources are not great enough for him to become a tyrant of his country, and I did not presume to punish every body. All those who saw me for the first time, pretended to have known me long ago.

“I believe the last words of Marat have been printed ;

but trust me he uttered none.

“I shall give you no particulars of his death, the newspapers will speak of it. I own, that what decided me completely, was the courage with which our volunteers enlisted on Sunday, July 7th.

“You remember how I was charmed ; and I promised myself steadily to make Retiou repent the suspicions he manifested respecting my sentiments. ‘Would you be sorry if they were not to depart hence ?’ said he.

“In short, I considered that so many brave men coming to Paris to seek the head of one single man, might have missed him ; or that his death might have entailed destruction on many good citizens, he was not worthy so much honour, the business was quite sufficient for the hands of a woman. I confess, that I was obliged to have recourse to a treacherous artifice in order to gain admittance to him. I intended when I left Caen, to have sacrificed him on the *summit* of the mountain of the convention ; he went no more to the convention.

“At Paris, they do not conceive how one useless woman, whose longest life would be of no avail, could sacrifice it in cold blood to save her whole country ; I really expected to die at the very instant. Men of courage, and above all praise, rescued me from the fury of those whom

I had made wretched—as I was really in cold blood, I suffered much from the cries of some women.

“ But she that saves her country, never minds what it costs—may peace be restored as soon as I desire ! There is now a great villian laid low, without which, we should never have obtained it. I have enjoyed peace for these two days past ; the happiness of my country constitutes my own. I do not doubt but they will torment my father, who already suffers but too much affliction by losing me.

“ I informed him lately, by letter, that being afraid of civil war I would go over to England ; my project then, was to remain incog upon the death of Marat, and I wanted to let the Parisians then, vainly trace my name. I entreat, citizen, you and your colleagues, to defend my parent if they are molested.

“ I never hated but one being, and I have displayed my character ; those who regret me, will rejoice at finding me enjoy repose in the Elysian fields, with Brutus and some ancients. Few are the patriots who know how to die for their country ; they are most of them egotists.

“ Two light horsemen have been set over me, to keep me from the vapours, I found this very well by day, but not by night.

"I complained of this, but the committee thought fit to pay no regard to my complaints. I believe this is a scheme of Cherbot's invention; none save a capuchin can have such ideas.

"Adieu, (Signed)

"CHARLOTTE CORDAY,"

There is one redeeming point in this letter; the utter exculpation of every one save herself, but there is a jarring lightness in the whole composition. The idea of meeting Brutus—of owning her affinity to Cæsar's murderer; the mention of *vapours*, when the overwhelming cares of conscience should be heard, these are points which strike us as we peruse the letter. Can we hardly fancy Charlotte Corday, the murderer, so young, soon to leave the world, sitting down and writing without more sad sentiments falling involuntarily on the paper. Strange that a heart so susceptible of romance, should not be more keenly alive to the reality of its position—and another letter, bearing the fatal inscription of a prison, seems not written in the strain a daughter might be supposed to address a father in such an instance. Besides in her previous letter, Charlotte had said that her father would feel her loss. Poor parental heart, to be so cruelly disappointed in the pride of a father's hope; but we will

see Charlotte's letter.

"From the prison of the Conciergerie

"My respected father,

"Peace is about to reign in my country—

Marat is no more! be comforted and bury me in eternal oblivion. I am to be judged to-morrow, the 17th, at seven o'clock. I have lived long enough, as I have achieved a great exploit. I put you under the protection of Barbarou and his colleagues, in case you should be molested. Let my relatives find my homage here, and remember each and all of you, that crime begets disgrace, and not the scaffold!

(Signed)

"CHARLOTTE CORDAY."

Poor Charlotte, even to the last, the same high towering spirit supported her, and perhaps, one of the severest trials she had, was when she heard of the honours paid to Marat's remains.

The funeral was performed with great pomp on the 16th, and an immense concourse congregated to pay honours to the man, who perhaps, a few months hence, would have met his death at the hands of that same fickle populace. To have witnessed the tears and heard the sobs of the multitude, any one would have imagined Marat had wiped the tears from orphan's eyes, and con-

soled widowed hearts. The sections formed a procession, bearing their various ensigns of office. *Marat's shirt stained with blood was carried by a *poissarde*. At the top of a pike, after this, followed a wooden bedstead, in which the corps was carried by citizens, his head was uncovered. The procession paraded through several streets, and was saluted on its march by several discharges of artillery. At half-past ten o'clock at night, his remains were deposited in a grave, dug in the yard of the Cordeliers, between four linden trees.

Charlotte heard the tolling of several bells, and she knew well what they meant ; sonorous as they were, they were as music in her ears—the *tyrant was buried!* Even in those prison walls, the latent sparks of poetry swelled round the unfortunate girl's mind, and taking forth a pencil from her belt, she drew near the table and wrote a last, a farewell poem.

* See Scott's account.

CHAPTER XVII.

There was something peculiarly irksome to Charlotte Corday, in the lengthened preparations for her trial, for she had not the least intention of denying the deed, for which she was prepared to suffer, and she did not arrange any particular form of speech, all she knew was, that she had murdered, and must bid farewell to earth.

Charlotte possessed so peculiar a temperament, that she not only persuaded herself that she had actually been called upon by some secret influence to slay Marat, but she called several parts of scripture to her aid, in which the almighty had distinctly placed it into his creatures hands to slay a tyrant. But how strangely false such arguments are, we very well know; and I shall leave it strictly to the consciences of my readers, to think as they please, on the fallacy of believing ourselves inspired, where inspiration from on high cannot possibly exist.

Every belief of her being insane was speedily rejected, when she answered the questions placed to her in a most

intellectual manner, and made several remarks, which certainly puzzled her judges, but every spark of colour forsook her cheeks when on being suffered to remain in an adjoining room, until the multitude had dispersed, Adele Belzunce, supported by her medical attendant, entered the apartment.

Charlotte started—what a wreck of young beauty was before her—the heaving chest, the hectic colour, the high brow without its fair tresses resting on it; the quivering pale lips. Oh, how sad was the change; whilst Charlotte looked at Adele in mute astonishment; the latter surveyed her companion with more pain, she had expected to see her tearful, drooping, timid, abashed, but Charlotte seemed to have gained beauty and strength.

Nothing could equal the lustre of the dark eyes that rested upon Adele's pale face—but at length they fell before the mild light of those gentle orbs fixed on her's; and Charlotte Corday wept convulsively.

“What ails you beloved Adele,” she sobbed; “why are you here like some wan shadow coming to remind me of the loved one, the chosen idol of my heart. Oh, that I felt once more before I die, his embrace upon my brow; that I listened once, only once, to the silvery tones

of his voice, I could die so much happier—I feel I could, I know it. Since you are here dear Adele upbraid me not—I shall soon cease to exist; do not upbraid me; pray do not?”

“Charlotte, I am only too fond of you—oh, why, why, did you not pause, why did you not think of the words, ‘Whoso sheddeth man’s blood, by man shall his blood be shed?’ Why did you not think of the branding mark on Cain’s doomed brow; poor girl, how I pity you?”

“I hate pity,” said Charlotte haughtily,.

“Then wherefore place yourself in a position to receive it. Charlotte, forgive me—I too received wrongs from Marat, he has sacrificed me to a cruel deceptive plot—I shall die of shame, and a broken heart; but I would not have slain Marat, though he had said he would slay me. vengeance belongs to God!”

“And so does forgiveness, dear Adele; but I beseech you do not let us differ now in this last hour, when we have agreed all our lives. Gracious God! did he really betray you. How, tell me?”

“Thy words tell all, I was decoyed into a false marriage by the hope of saving my brother, who is now in England on the point of death. Oh, I hope soon to be

at rest, for since the fatal day I made the discovery that I was Marat's dupe, I have not had a moment's peace ; am I not changed?"

Charlotte could not answer, but she clasped the poor faded girl to her bosom, and she felt the throbbing of that young heart, so lately the seat of youthful joys, and happy pulsations.

"How can I dare place my arms around you," at length Charlotte exclaimed, withdrawing her grasp; "am I not soiled with sin ? Farewell Adele, farewell my beloved friend; may every blessing heart can wish, come to your portion—your's was a deceived heart, you did not sin wantonly ; God will forgive you Adele, and your fair face will again be blooming. The early spring of next year think of me, remember how I loved to cull the first early violets, and if you learn where they deposit my remains, come and strew them on my grave."

Adele could only answer with sobs, and Charlotte continued—

"Console my father and mother dearest, they will take care of you, and you will be far better to them than their hapless daughter has proved. God bless you dearest, we must meet no more, this must be our last parting, I can-

not bear this trial a second time, these are the scenes which try our constancy, not the unmeaning gaze of the countless multitude."

"Charlotte, once again are you prepared to die ; are you prepared to meet your angry creator? if you have thoughts of God the merciful; have you thought of God the avenger?"

"Adele, Adele, I beseech you, let me die indulging my own belief ; I do think there is a God avenger, but there is a God all merciful—he will take into consideration, my sufferings below, the early doom of my years, the agony of a painful death—some beautiful voice whispers, 'thou shalt be forgiven.'"

Most sincerely did Adele hope the young enthusiast was not indulging a false hope ; perhaps there was more repentance in the depths of Charlotte's heart, than it was in mortal man's power to fathom ; or thought Adele, how could she think of her shocking end without more poignant grief!

"I have committed a crime," continued the hapless girl, "and I must suffer the penalty of the law—I must submit to the degradation of the scaffold, but again I say, God will forgive me. It was for sinners that the holy one died, and I as a sinner must surely have a portion of

that mercy. Now, dearest Adele, we must part, do not remain to see my poor hands tied ; I hear the sound of my iron clasps. I, who from my childhood have ever been so fond of freedom."

It was true, an officer advanced and gently chained the unfortunate girl's hands, for the orders were very strict respecting the young girl's imprisonment. The last use she made of the liberty she had, was to wave her hand to Adele, in token that she wished her to leave. "Go, go," she cried, her face crimson, her eyes full of tears.

Adele withdrew, after clasping poor Charlotte once more to her breast, and she never saw her friend again.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Marat the tyrant! Marat the oppressor—Marat the scourge of France—epithets too just, odious words too real ; and was it for thee that a woman sat in her lonely chamber, shedding poignant tears of regret. Marie, thy pretty favourite is weeping. Monster, couldst thou love? Was it not the mockery of that soft feeling.

“Almost divine.”

Yet, there she sits, weeping and wailing, so strange is the human heart.

But after awhile came the dawn of reflection, Marie went into the room where the murdered corse lay extended on the bed, and there she pondered so long, that years in their revolutions seemed passing before her sight as she communed above with the dead. No—it was not surely with the dead Marat she communed, unless indeed, the soul freed from earthly charms, were much altered from its living aspirations ; surely rather it was a beautified vision which passed over Marie's sight, for from that hour no heart could be more effectually altered. She

weighed the balance, believed virtue and vice, and she turned to the rich reward promised to the former ; she wept Magdalen tears, and she promised herself that they should be tarried only at the fount of deep repentance.

Who dare say that sinners shall not be forgiven? who dare cast the stone, proclaiming himself to be free from sin ?

But Marie knew how deeply she had sinned ; she had read that sin is as much committed in thought as in deed, and she strove to efface even the image of Marat from a heart which he had taught to go astray.

Another task remained for her to do—it was at the voice of her screams for help, that Charlotte Corday had been seized ; she had helped to secure her, and now she pitied that poor doomed young creature, and she determined to make an effort to save her.

She knelt at Robespierre's feet, she bathed his hands with tears, but the rough man merely said, with a scoffing laugh—

“ Ha, ha, pretty Marie, how soon women forget their lovers.”

“ I have not forgotten him,” said Marie, whilst a blush of shame tinged her cheeks, for *now* she could see her weakness and blush at it. “ Can I ever forget him, was

I not a guileless young creature, was not my only misfortune *poverty*, when Marat first took me into his service. Oh that shining gold, for how many virtues is it bartered ?”

“ This, from thee, Marie ; come, come, what is the use of deceiving me ?”

“ I am not deceiving thee, Robespierre ; I am a sinful creature, very, very wicked, but I hope to be forgiven,

I will never let an opportunity of doing good pass unnoticed, it is the only atonement I can make for the past. Oh man, man, scoff me not, thou who carest so little for virtue—remember only Marat’s power, his dreadful revenge when thwarted in his wishes ; be lenient to a suppliant woman, remember that the hour of temptation comes suddenly, mine was in the dark hour when poverty stared me in the face, and then afterwards to reconcile me to myself, I learnt to love the destroyer.”

But Robespierre was not touched—what could soften him ? Again he laughed, and his laugh was so hollow, so full of vice and daring.

“ Another six months and you will again be gentille Marie, perhaps *my* gentille Marie. Arise, what would you have sweet one ?”

“ Wicked man, dare you talk thus to a suppliant

female, who owns her sins, and talks of repentance—are you the fiend in disguise ? Oh hear me, hear my prayer, the days of reflection however far now, will come in some unforeseen moment. Save your conscience from this sin, forgive Charlotte Corday.”

“ Marie, now I am astonished at thee, dost not think Marat’s ghost would persecute me if I were to forgive his murderer ? No, no, leave me to battle with the living, but the dead

* * * * *

“ Hush, hush, Robespierre, the dead cannot harm you ; it was whilst watching by the dead form of Marat, that I felt the first anguish of sorrow for the past ; Oh, by the recollection of that moment, I feel assured the dead *cannot, will* not harm you. Save that poor young girl, perhaps her mind was distraught ; save her, save her.”

Robespierre only swore a terrible oath, that he would go to the scaffold himself, sooner than forgive Marat’s murderer. Little did he think that he would really perish on the scaffold, for his words were like those of all others, who pretend to make light of their lives, whilst not even a hair of their head is their own.

Saddened and broken hearted Marie left the hardened man’s presence, she turned away quickly, but when be-

yond the room, she gave one lingering look to see if Robespierre repented—he only kissed the ends of his fingers, and waved his hand gallantly towards her. Then Marie felt how degraded she was, since that vile man dared to behave lightly towards her, and she lifted down the veil over her bonnet for she was weeping bitterly. An impulse she could not controul, led her to enter a church ; mass had not commenced, but she went towards some humble corner in the edifice, dedicated to a lowly martyr, and she prayed and sobbed.

A priest from a neighbouring confessional heard those sobs, and he gently disburthened the oppressed heart. We may consider this in our protestant country, as one of the errors of popery, but there are instances in which a confession has been the salvation of a soul.

The priest, to whom the suppliant Marie knelt, was an *universal* christian ; by which term I signify that he would have been a good and feeling, an upright character, whatever forms he might have followed. He feared and loved God, that was his *universal* religion ; he spared no trouble, he omitted no opportunity of serving his fellow men, that was his *practical* religion—he cared little to hear the confessions of those who at stated times were appointed to “ come and sin again,” but he sought out

misery where it really existed, and Marie's cold hand rested in his, whilst he talked of the convent sanctuary, and the repentent's forgiveness.

A short time afterwards, Marie bid a somewhat reluctant farewell to the world. She felt that to her, the convent would be the punishment she deserved—she felt how much better it would have been to have lived in the world, one of God's free and virtuous creatures.

But the isolated being never repined, she was the lowliest of the lowly ; the most humble, penitent sinner; and surely if ever angels above felt that holy joy, which is the sinner's hail when he returns to the fold of virtue—surely it was felt when Marie knelt suppliant and trusting in the cell which she was never more to quit.

CHAPTER XIX.

The day fixed for Charlotte's final examination approached, and the intrepid girl felt that her doom was perfectly sealed. Oh, that the high born energies of her lofty soul, should have fallen from their eminence into so low an abyss of degradation. In vain the poor heroine protested that she had done a *good* not a *bad* action. The gaze of thousands would all be centred upon her youthful countenance; and, all undaunted as she was, still she was a woman, and with womanly delicacy she recoiled from the exposure of a public death; every feeling was now schooled to meet that fearful end,

Fancy readers, not the heroine of an imaginary tale, but a young lovely female, strong in the glowing hue of health; engaged to be married; innocent in all, save that fanatical crime—fancy her, with a mind clear and alive to her dreadful position, calmly bidding a last adieu to earth.

No more would the “sun king” rise in stupendous majesty before her enthusiastic gaze, no more would

bowers and valleys be trod by her, who loved so nature's behests ; no more would the voice of love breathe its tale in her ears. Hapless victim of fanaticism—victim of a patriotic crime, thy days are o'er. The melodious voice of birds again will sound, and brooks will flow as they had hitherto done ; the butterflies would ply their aerial wings in the midsummer breezes ; but alas, Charlotte would view these glories no more.

Like

“The mill sounds hoarse upon the wind.”

were the sounds of the many human voices buzzing round the hall, where the young murderer was to be tried—and hisses only fell on those saddened ears—those hisses struck grief, palsied, to her very soul.

Yet many, many there, in that vast congregation, viewed with keenest pity that young and strikingly handsome girl ; imprisonment had not yet dimmed the quenchless lustre of those eyes, the polished brow, the well turned head, the darkly flowing tresses, and that majestic walk. Were they so soon to be scarcely remembered?

Some there were who sighed, some there were who sobbed ; the scene was impressive, the occasion was life and death—and Charlotte walked firmly through that

terrible throng; she looked around so undaunted, and reflected upon her face, seemed

“ The guardian of a mind,
Free from thralls of earthly kind.”

Unfortunate girl, the aspirations of that mind, unrestrained by the curb it so much required, flickered only

“ A halo round an early tomb.”

Every murmur was hushed in that vast assembly, not a sound was heard, when Charlotte Corday was addressed by the public accuser, as follows :—

“ What made you, Charlotte Corday, commit so wilful an act of murder?”

“ What made me commit the deed?” replied Charlotte in a firm voice, “ it has been a dream by night, a waking idea by day ; I have fed upon the teeming thoughts of this act ! In years to come it will be called glorious—I have rid the world of a tyrant—I have done that which many have long wished to do. Now take my life, I am prepared to die—torture me not with a long trial, I do not wish to defend myself, I am guilty. I solemnly declare I have no accomplices, my own mind spurred me on to the deed ; I glory in it, I rejoice at the tyrant’s death—monster, heinous monster as he was ! ”

“ Are you not ashamed of being a murderer ? ”

"I know it is a fearful deed, but my death will expiate my offence."

"Was this the dagger with which you committed the deed?"

"It was—well do I remember purchasing it, I thought I should have fainted, but I grew accustomed to the weapon, and I handled it rightly, it struck the tyrant—he has perished as tyrants should perish, and may the deed be productive of good. France, unhappy, disturbed country, return to thy allegiance. Enough, enough," continued Charlotte, waving her hand, "ask me no more questions, I have none to answer; I am accused, I know it, now proclaim my accusation."

But an effort was still made to defend that hapless young creature, every nerve was strung in the endeavour of making an eloquent discourse.

"Be not rash in your sentence," said the noble pleader to his brother judges, "around that sweet face, no habitual vice has stamped its abode in the heart—she is an impassioned fanatical girl—consider her youth, be lenient to her crime. Shunned as she might be by the world, still let her have the erring one's portion in it; let her find a refuge in the arms of repentance."

"She has fled far from the garden of Eden, but she

might retrace her wandering steps ; the blossoms of the early tree are blighted, but perchance a few germs of virtue are yet entire. Spare them, spare them, cut not down the slender young tree, let it wither yet a few breezes, let it stand until another spring may restore its freshness, perchance then it might bloom amidst the proudest ornaments of the garden's parterre."

"That hapless girl is young, too young to die—she is not hardened in the path of sin, she has erred, she may repent. Would you give the sinner a punishment? Grant her life—there are solemn, mysterious hours in existence, when the reflection of crime is sharper than the fatal axe. Spare that young girl, let her feel such moments—and some day with rekindled hope, with still beaming countenance, some day again in the bosom of domestic peace, the sinner's crime will scarcely be recalled whilst the woman's gentleness shall shed a halo over the circles of her love * * * *

* * * *

He ceased to speak, that noble pleader his voice; was choked with emotion, his eyes were filled with the briny sympathetic drops; he gazed long and mournfully on the unfortunate girl for whose life he was pleading, he beheld her glorious face, her splendid figure, he heaved many

sighs when he thought of the cruel guillotine. But tyrannical as Marat had really been, he had friends and partisans in that assembly, they called loudly for vengeance, even women stilling the voice of pity, cried for the death of the murderer."

Then Charlotte's face was suddenly flushed ; " I must die," whispered a secret voice, and like the Roman of old I will meet, not avoid death.

She heaved one deeply drawn sigh from her sad breast, and then as if *determined* and sadly resolute, she addressed the multitude:—

" Murmur not," she cried, " cease your exclamations, your vengeance shall be appeased, I shall die the murderer's death—long, long, have I bid farewell to earth—long has the desire of life flickered and died in my bosom. The agony of sorrow is past, I hail death, I would only that the last moment were past. And have ye the heart, cruel, cruel men, to gaze on the end of a young creature, not twenty years old ; I almost feared to receive the boon of life from your hands, but Marat's influence has made you strangely cruel."

" My earthly doom is in your hands, but have I no hope ? None, none, from men, but from on high, from the beautified throne of forgiveness, there seraphs are

singing their hail, and they have yet a humble seat reserved for the repentant sinner. Eternal fount of mercy, from those springs shall I henceforth draw: no more earthly trials, no more earthly woe. Are there mothers in this assembly? If so, shed a few tears over the memory of the young daughter, disappointing maternal hope."

"I must see my daughter, my own, my young, my hapless Charlotte," cried a shrilling voice, and Madame Corday threw her arms round her poor child's neck. What cared she then that she clasped a guilty one? Did she ever remember that Charlotte had given her cause for complaint? No, no, the warm heart of a mother's love, was outpouring its grief, and she wept long and convulsively. Then she threw herself on her knees before the judges.

"Are ye men?" she cried, "are ye men? Spare her, spare the poor stray lamb, restore her to the fold of a mother's penitential roof, let her die repentant on my bosom. Cannot her youth soften ye? Must the guillotine sever that beautiful throat? look, look, it is overful with the richness of youth; look up Charlotte, fall on your knees—great God have pity on my child!"

"He will have pity on me dearest mother—he will not put it in men's hearts to forgive me, I could not live now

that I am degraded. Mother, mother, let me die ; forget your poor hapless child."

"Forget thee, my own—go tell the winds no more to blow on this, our earth ; tell the verdure never more to bloom ; tell heaven and earth to change their usual routine, but never tell a mother's heart to forget. The evening wind will bring back the burden of thy last sigh ; I will gaze on thee dying—expiring ; and the sad image will soon lay me low, Thy father is sorely stricken, we shall soon die."

"Oh God ! and I have caused this—away, away, mother, my brain is reeling, my heart is on fire ; I never knew misery till this hour. Cease thy prayers, cease thy sighs ; spare me, spare me—go mother, leave me."

"Not yet, Charlotte, not yet ; fall on your knees, clasp your hands, beg for mercy !"

"To you I will bend my knees, my much injured mother, but not to these men," and so saying, Charlotte prostrated herself at her mother's feet.

Her bonnet came off her head, and her spiral tresses fell in rich masses over her brow, her eyes turned to her mother's face, harrowed the spectators with their heart-stricken gaze, her hands clasped her mother's knees.

"Forgive me, forgive me, dearest mother ; bless me

before I die—bless the unfortunate girl who has sinned before you and before God. Let the sound of that blessing obliterate all the fearful curses heaped upon my name. If there be mercy on earth, and forgiveness in heaven, let thy blessing be its merciful type!”

“Bless thee, my Charlotte, bless thee, God forgive thee thy sins; God take thee under his protecting wing—but Charlotte, my own, pray for forgiveness, kneel to your judges!”

“Never, never, never. Mother you know not what men are; you know not that they sympathise with a tyrant, they love the man who shed blood at his will—they forget the cries of widows, the wail of orphans. Farewell, beloved mother, forgive all the waywardness of my young days; kiss my father and my little sister for me, and leave me to die. Do not let any of my young friends forget me; let my memory live in their hearts as a warning image, when they would feel the fuel of imagination. Live for better hearts than mine—now, I beseech you, leave me!”

One lengthened embrace, one piercing shriek of affection; one look, such as a heartbroken mother alone can give, and the unfortunate pair were severed; never, never more to meet again. For that mother never

found courage to gaze upon the scene her daughter contemplated with Spartan fortitude.

CHAPTER XX.

It was a gay July morning, the last the hapless Charlotte would spend on earth. It was well that she could not gaze upon the bright green fields, it was well that she heard not the upsoaring lark, for it would have augmented the pain of dying.

It was sad enough to die, whilst the bright sun was shining, and every thing around wore the bridal vesture of summer, and though Charlotte was away from the lovely hands of nature, her richly freighted fancy bore testimony to the panorama upon which she would no more gaze. She fancied she heard the murmur of the laborious bees, she fancied the flowers upon which they rested, were spreading their fragrance in one last farewell. She saw the bowers in which she had reposed, she seemed kneeling again in the humble village church.

"Farewell to this earth," she exclaimed, "it is sad to leave it in the strongest health ; a weary sufferer on the couch of suffering might hail death as an angel voice, but I am yet so young, so strong, so full of life's energy—and

love, come like a shadow between earth and heaven. The wish of loving has been rare with me, once only have I felt true love, but poor Frederic must forget me—even from the distant spot where he now is, the tale of my murder and execution will reach him ; alas, will he hate me ? I think not: can he forget me ? I hope not: God only knows all the joy I wish him, and some day when a gentle one, such a being as he ought to love, shall chain her destiny to his, oh, then he can still think with pity of the unhappy girl who first won his affections.”

Charlotte dressed herself with as much care as usual, she was calm and resigned when the fatal moment drew near. The multitude flocked densely together ; oh, hideous, appalling sight ; all, all, gazing on that poor young creature, in the first bloom of her spring loveliness. Some of the lowest rabble insulted her with opprobrious epithets, others buffeted her, and the gens d’armes had to close around her as she reached her destination. She mounted the scaffold with firm steps, and then she stood for a moment surveying the multitude around her.

“Hapless race of human beings,” she said, with a curl of disdainful scorn, what ! have they come to gaze upon me, as the Romans upon the gladiators. I might well exclaim, ‘let him who is without sin cast the first stone,’

but I will think no more of men, I will pray."

Charlotte fell on her knees before the scaffold—"Father of mercy, disposer of mankind, hear my fervent prayer; enlighten the mind of my unhappy countrymen, teach them all the sins of oppression, let not another tyrant rise in Marat's stead; take my country under thy protecting guidance; keep, oh keep the creatures of thy moulding I have sinned—I have sinned before earth and before thee; there is no shame in mounting the scaffold steps, but there is sin in having committed the crime: may my present sufferings be the last. God the judge, be thou God the merciful; turn from thy just wrath, cast thy pitying gaze upon my poor erring heart. Lord, who but thee understandeth the heart—who save thyself canst tell, how like a vital part of life itself, I had fostered the event which now brings me to my grave. A few moments more, all, all, will be over. It is but a blow which severs life. It is but rending one slight thread; short the space between life and eternity; but how boundless that eternity * * * * *

Eternity will not pass as the tale of life; Oh, let me dwell with thee, most merciful Jehovah—king of heaven—judge, full of mercy!"

No more, no more, once she raised her splendid eyes,

once she pushed back the ringlets from her brow, those ringlets once so prized, were cut off from around her doomed throat. It was, as it were, the type of a more fearful stroke, she placed her hand on her throat, and she shuddered.

The executioner approached, he touched the hem of her dress.

"Surely not surely you do not mean to disrobe me here?"

"Nay, madam ; I wish to bind you."

"Do it then," replied poor Charlotte.

These were the last words she uttered, in less than an instant her pangs were over, her young life had paid the penalty of the law ; Charlotte Corday was no more.

Oh, then like the voice of mariners speaking again, when the loud sounds of the tempest are quelled, voices were heard pitying, pitying when it was too late. And the corpse was buried by the grave of Louis the Sixteenth—the martyred king reposed by the intrepid girl—type of strange equality. Would Louis the Sixteenth ever have known Charlotte Corday? But there they rested side by side, equal in the sight of God. And contrary to Charlotte's doubt, the turf did grow around her grave, and gentle robins would come and sing over her resting.

place, and school children would not blame, but pitying say, "there lies *poor* Charlotte Corday."

Many hearts bore her in memory, the gentle Adele did not long survive her friend, she died the death her young companion never shared—surrounded, not by the vulgar crowd, but by a few sympathising friends. She died, as innocent in thought, as before she had learned the treachery of life, and before her death, she was cheered by the presence of her brother. She died in the arms of the friend of her childhood. She wept the last tear of grief on his bosom, and he received her latest sigh.

Ask not now, *who* strewed Charlotte Corday's grave with flowers, ask not why they bloomed fresher then on Louis the king's tomb? Were they not planted by the hands of a lover? Were they not bedewed with his tears?

No gentle one found repose on his bosom; Frederic had been faithful to Charlotte through all her conspicuous faults, and now he remained faithful to her memory. Years rolled on, and after Robespierre's death, great events happened. Napoleon arose like a star from the east, to throw the glory of his conquests around the nation he loved. And we will not here tarry till that star set in the west. My heart feels sad, my pen wanders uneasily, and as if mourning over the fate of a young

and hapless companion, I can enter into no other topic,
for morbid are the feelings produced by the death of
CHARLOTTE CORDAY.

FINIS.

A FEW EXTRACTS FROM REVIEWS.

OF

"THE ASTROLOGER'S DAUGHTER."

"The character of Catherine is in itself a study, and the author of these volumes has treated it with much power. The influence exercised by her own feeble and wretched son, is treated unmistakeably, to the contrast between a strong mind and a weak one; and the lines of her evil but dazzling character are drawn with a vigorous precision. Miss Hendriks has happily contrived to make her romance the interpreter, not the pervertor of grave truths." *Morning Post.*

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"With all the faults of youth, this work has also all its merits. It shews great industry, and abundance of genius on the part of the writer." *Colonial and Military Gazette.*

"There are many portions of Miss Hendriks' work, that remind us of the charming writings of the author of 'The Inheritance'" *A Country Paper.*

